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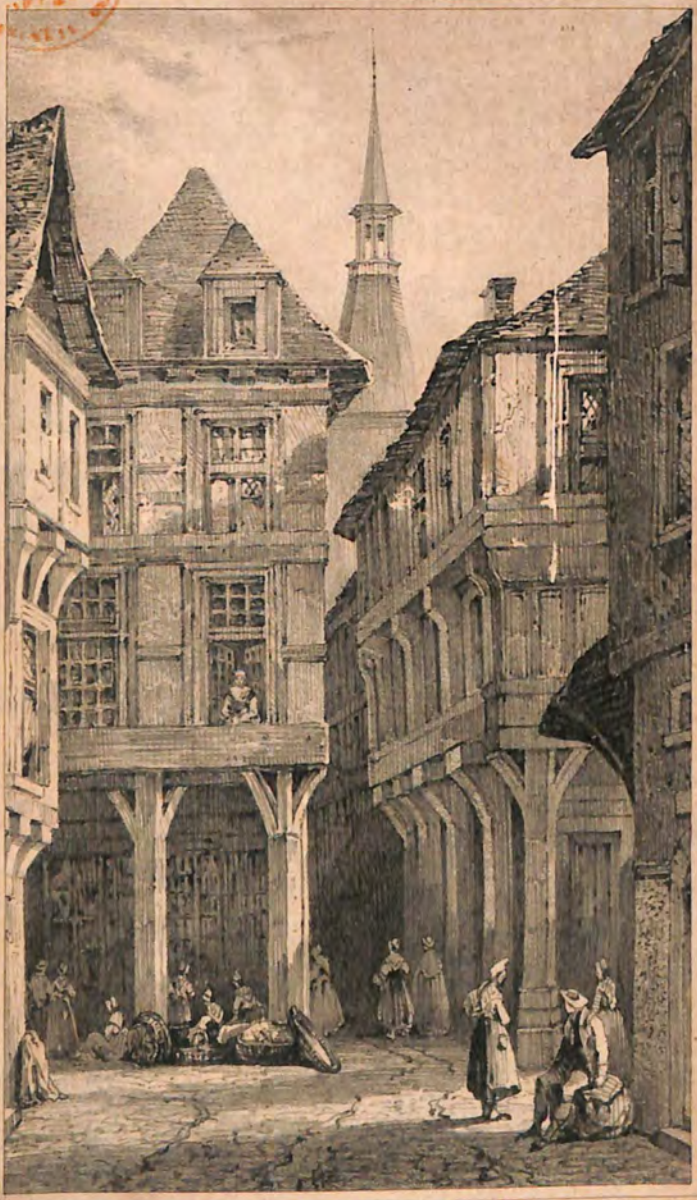

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A SUMMER

AMONGST THE

BOCAGES AND THE VINES.

B1966

BY

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO.

AUTHOR OF

"SPECIMENS OF THE EARLY POETRY OF FRANCE."

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"La Nature se joue du pinceau des hommes: lorsqu'on croit qu'il a atteint sa plus grande beauté, elle sourit et s'embellit encore."

AUDUBON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1840.

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TO THE LADY BURDETT,

THIS SUMMER TOUR,

IN THE DETAILS OF WHICH SHE TOOK SO MUCH KIND INTEREST,

IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HER LADYSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO.

London, July 1840.

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BOCAGES AND THE VINES.

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Havre.—Caen.—French Impatience.—Canal.—Brummell.—Use and Elegance.—Races.—Abbaye aux Hommes.—Abbaye aux Dames.—The Conqueror and his Queen.—Churches.—St. Pierre.—Lady Chapel.—Castle.—St. Gilles.—Streets.—Costume.—Scenery near Caen.—Bretteville l'Orgueilleuse.—Triumphal Garlands.—Bayeux.—The Tapestry.—Cathedral.—The Rose Garden.—The Lion d'Or.

NORMANDY is allowed to be one of the most beautiful and most cultivated parts of France; a fact which no one can feel any inclination to dispute, who, leaving the clean and lively port of Southampton, takes his passage in summer weather to Havre, and lands at that bustling town, amidst the screaming of innumerable parrots, and the noise and clamour of French commissionaires. The height of In-

gouville, with its fine sea prospect, gives the traveller his first idea of the beauty in store for him as he advances into the country; but he leaves the town of Francis I. impatient to become acquainted with the interior, and proposing to himself to examine it more in detail, should he return that way.

The coast from Havre to Caen, as the steamboat sweeps along, with a light breeze and a bright sky, looks gay and fine; and the passage to the mouth of the Orne is a pleasant one. The entrance of this river is very sinuous, and at times the vessel appears to be completely embayed; the banks are pretty, covered with trees to the water's edge, and the stream very narrow. The approach to Caen is marked by the lofty towers of the two abbeys of the Conqueror and his wife, and the majestic spires of St. Pierre in the midst.

Full of curiosity and interest at the first sight of this celebrated town, we gave ourselves up to the delight of visiting scenes consecrated in history, and landed on the quay of Caen in high spirits. An air of desolation, however, which appeared to reign around, might have a little damped enthusiasm less pronounced than ours, as we followed our guide, who led us by the longest possible route to our hotel. His object

we found, was to exhibit the unfinished canal which is to connect the Orne with a part of the coast; and the blocks of stone which strew the way for more than half a mile, added to the deep dust consequent upon the works, presented anything but an agreeable prospect on our walk.

This embryo canal is the *lion* of Caen, and every Sunday sees crowds of people promenading along its *future* banks — it being one of the characteristics of the French never to wait for the completion of anything, but to begin their enjoyment before the proper time; thus, when a house is being built, it is not at all unusual to see the lower rooms half-furnished before any part is entirely finished; and it is amusing enough to observe finely-ornamented pieces of furniture standing amongst planks and beams, ready to decorate an apartment still in an infant state.

Tired with our long walk, during which we had but coldly replied to the admiring observations of our guide, to whom the canal in progress, with all the litter of its planks and stones, appeared another Palmyra, we were not ill-pleased when we entered the *porte-cochère* of the Hôtel d'Angleterre in the Rue St. Jean. The rooms which were assigned to us formerly boasted of a distinguished occupant, the celebrated Brum-

mell, whose lot, never to be envied, is now one of peculiar misfortune. The favourite of a monarch, and the supreme arbiter of fashion, is at present the denizen of the *maison des fous* at Caen, and there, most probably, his days will terminate.

Caen is a very old, very picturesque, but very dirty town; at least, in those parts where curiosity most attracts the traveller. The houses immediately fronting our hotel, which was in a principal street, were fair specimens of the domestic architecture of the place, and the domestic manners of its inhabitants. The buildings rose some seven or eight stories from the ground, each *étage* had its family, and each family seemed bent on preparing for the following day, Sunday. This was chiefly shown in the care with which they displayed at their windows the various articles of costume susceptible of soap and water hanging there to dry. No garment seemed to come amiss, male or female, all were alike conspicuous; and amidst the depending draperies, cages filled with very yellow canaries were hung between every window, while small orange, and other trees, contributed their share to the grace and originality of the scene.

The races of Caen are considered amongst the best in France, and some very good horses are

really entered. The resident English have tended much to support the predilection for them, with which we found our waiter inoculated, who was very eloquent in explaining to some of our party all the merits of the case.

The chief attractions of Caen, are the two abbeys founded by William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda, about the period of the conquest, the church of St. Nicholas, St. Pierre, St. Michel de Vaucelles, the Hôtel de Ville, and the remains of the old castle.

As specimens of pure Norman architecture, the Abbaye aux Hommes, or St. Etienne, and the Abbaye aux Dames, or La Sainte Trinité, may be considered as quite perfect; and their simplicity of form and solidity of construction have probably tended to preserve them better than buildings of a later date, ornamented in a more florid style. Yet these churches have suffered, like most others, by religious fanaticism and the fury of irreligion: the Calvinists and the democrats of the Revolution having each outraged the sacred fanes. A stone with a modern inscription in Latin, placed in the choir by General Dugua, is the only written record of the Conqueror in the Abbaye aux Hommes, nor is there any more genuine relic of Queen Matilda in the convent founded by her: but the build-

ings themselves are the best monuments of the founders. Severe in their antique simplicity, they do not please the eye like those elaborately beautiful remains of the middle ages which are met with in other parts of France, but they possess a charm in their stately and awful majesty which greater splendour sometimes fails to inspire.

The church of St. Pierre has a lady-chapel of great beauty; the roof is formed of pendants carved with infinite delicacy, and the effect produced is like that of stalactites in a grotto, and is light and graceful in the extreme. Several of the other chapels are ornamented with elaborate care, but there is not a vestige of painted glass, either here or in any church in Caen.

There are but few remains of the once important castle, now a guard-house. We sat for some time enjoying the brilliant summer weather, under the fine old trees in what had been a court, and looked from the ruined battlements over a charming country; but the state of neglect and dirt in which everything is allowed to continue, makes the exploring system in France a service of danger and disgust.

The exterior of the church of St. Gilles is more modern than its interior, and is cruelly defaced: as we passed the open doors, the mo-

notonous chaunting of a crowd of pretty young girls within, sounded pleasing from its extreme simplicity. The beauty of the women of Normandy becomes sensibly felt here, for scarcely a plain or ordinary face is to be met with, and a general beauty prevails throughout this favoured province: unfortunately, however, as is usual in a cider country, the teeth are seldom fine.

Our arrival in Caen on a Saturday had probably introduced us to more slovenliness than usual; for, shocked as we were at every step at first, we found that on Sunday we had less cause of offence in the streets and *venelles;* nevertheless, though I have since heard Caen described by a French person as a remarkably clean town, I must still think that it surpasses all others, except Rouen, in unpleasing odours and filthy streets. Certain it is that here and there slips of pavement for foot passengers, allow intervals to the torture which *English* feet endure when *without sabots* they venture along the rugged ways of a French city.

The people of Caen are uniformly civil, cheerful, and good-humoured, constantly talking and laughing, industrious, and, to all appearance, prosperous. Their manners are less characteristic of the Normans in general than in more retired parts of the country, as they mix much

with foreigners and Parisians, and have lost all distinguishing features; the women, however, preserve their costume more here than in many other districts, where this national distinction is fast fading away: here, only, for example, we saw caps embroidered with gold and silver, and ornamented with rich lace; everywhere else, though the steeple form of the middle ages is still prevalent, more simple materials are used. At Rouen it is rare to see even this shape of the antique head-dress, which is nearly as much remarked there as in the streets of Paris where a *bonne* is occasionally seen conducting her young charges through the mazes of the Tuileries gardens.

The country, immediately on leaving Caen, is barren and stony, a fact arising from the numerous quarries which lie close to the town. They are worked in the form of caves, each communicating with the surface by means of shafts, and the stones are raised by enormous wheels, which, scattered over the plain, produce a singular effect. About a mile from Caen is the faubourg of St. Germain de Blancherbe, called La Maladrerie, from a lazar-house founded there in 1161, by Henry II. of England. The hospital has long since disappeared, but a large steam-mill, and the Maison de Force of the district, meet the eye instead.

After half an hour's travelling, the country began to look very pretty,—thick woods appeared on each side; orchards, cottages, villages, and the spires of numerous churches. The farm houses are much neater than one usually sees in France; most of them have gardens, and the roofs of the building at this season are generally covered with a luxuriant growth of pink stone-crop, called, in the language of the peasants *tetons de souris*. A few miles from Caen we passed through a village called Bretteville *l'Orgueilleuse*, to distinguish it from others bearing the same name.

The scenery continued to improve, rich farms covered the country, and here and there occasional *châteaux*, an ancient *abbaye*, or a picturesque spire, added variety to the view. The orchards were numerous, but this year they render but a bad account of their crops; in fact, they are all destroyed, and the cider, which ordinarily sells for from 40 to 50 francs the *tonneau*, has risen to 250 or 300 francs; a serious change for a cider-drinking community. At the village of St. Exupère we passed beneath triumphal garlands, which had been festooned across the road in honour of the St. Martin: these decorations were singular, consisting chiefly of flowers and hard-boiled eggs, arranged in the

shape of crowns and baskets. The votaries of the saint resemble Dryden's Jebusites; the objects of their adoration may

"Serve at once for worship and for food,"

and after hanging the regular time, I suppose they are eaten.

Two hours and a half from Caen brought us to Bayeux, where *faute de mieux*, we put up at the Lion d'Or. The tapestry, of course, claimed our first attention, and we proceeded direct to the Mairie, where it is kept. Its present receptacle is an old cupboard in one of the private rooms, but a building is now in the course of erection for its express reception; it used formerly to be exposed in the cathedral for a whole fortnight at one particular season, but that custom is discontinued. What the tapestry is everybody knows; therefore I shall say no more of Queen Matilda's workmanship than that it is a most interesting historical document. The person who showed it put into our hands little pamphlets, costing ten sous each, containing a brief account of the tapestry, with a copy of the inscriptions and descriptive letter-press. She seemed to ascribe much virtue to the little books. "Depuis qu'on a vendu ces livres, beaucoup de personnes sont venues voir

la tapisserie!" It is to be presumed that the old lady had never read the folios of Montfaucon. In the adjoining chamber is a curious picture representing the famous battle of Fourmigny.

From the tapestry we went to the cathedral—beautiful both within and without, and only not perfect in its exterior, owing to the addition of a Grecian dome above the central tower, which should have been made to harmonise with the beautiful spires of the western extremity. But the dome was added in the reign of Louis XIV, when the architecture of the middle ages was neither felt nor understood. The interior is extremely fine, and exhibits a beautiful specimen of the transition style of the middle of the twelfth century. The capitals, the mouldings, and string courses are of every variety of graceful form, and one may linger for hours in admiration of the beauties which disclose themselves in every aisle, at every intersection. We descended into the crypt, which contains what is rare in the cathedrals here—some tombs with effigies; the Revolution having swept away so many relics of that nature. Amongst them is a monument to the memory of the Bishop of Bayeux, whose death was the cause of the discovery of the crypt after it had remained concealed

for centuries. A brass tablet, on the south side of the screen of the choir, gives the following account of it in old French :—

"L'an M.CCCC. et douze,
Le tiers jour d'Avril que pluie arrouze
Les biens de terre, la journée
Que la Pasque fu celebrée,
Noblez homs et révérent père
Jehan de Boissait, de la mère
Eglise de Baieux pasteur,
Rendi l'ame à son créateur,
Et lors en foissant la place
Devant le grant auteil de grace,
Trouva len la basse chapelle,
Dont il n'avoit ésté nouvelle,
Où il est mis en sépulture;
Dieu vieulle avoir son ame en cure.
"Amen,"

The present Bishop of Bayeux, Monsieur Robert, is a man held in high estimation throughout his diocese, and worthily sustains the character of the working clergy of France, following the great example of the late excellent Cardinal de Cheverus, Archbishop of Bordeaux. He was formerly *curé* of Havre, and from his merit was appointed to his present high dignity from that comparatively humble post.

The central part of the town of Bayeux is dirty, mean, and common, but there are some

fine establishments with spacious gardens which give an air of cheerfulness to the whole. Of these the Hôtel Dieu, founded by Bishop Robert d'Ablèges in the year 1206, and the seminary of comparatively modern erection, are the most considerable. There are also some good baths built beside a mill-stream and a rose garden in the Rue de l'Echo worthy of Persia and her nightingales. The proprietor, who is an amateur florist, is as courteous to strangers as the inhabitant of a bower of roses should be, and his pretty daughter's complexion would shame those of the eastern maids who love to dwell among the fragrant groves of Iran.

Far different was the aspect of the hotel where we were perforce obliged to put up. Notwithstanding the newly emblazoned sign-board exhibiting a golden lion in all his glory, we found ourselves wofully deceived by the promise held out, for on entering the court-yard, we found it filled with *immondices* of every description, muddy damp straw, filthy puddles, &c.

In front of a projecting building was exhibited the yawning entrance to a kitchen, and the square yard we had to traverse was surrounded by stables and out-houses, filled with poultry, ducks, dunghills, dogs, and dilapidated vehicles of all descriptions. In a new range

of buildings was our apartment for the time,—a bed room,—for saloons do not seem customary at Bayeux; this was fitted up with taste and even elegance, and we could not enough *admire* the absurd contrast of above and below. All our accommodations were excellent; the *chef* could not be better, and the delicious cream and strawberries were proper rural accompaniments to the ceaseless crowing and cackling of the fowls in the *basse cour*. Altogether, anything so incongruous as the arrangements of the Lion d'Or, it would be difficult to meet with except at Bayeux.

Though from the improvements, rather projected than accomplished, in this town, most of the ancient streets are cleared away, there still remain some to which curious legends are attached. We were able to collect a few, which entertained us not a little.

CHAPTER II.

Bayeux.—Legends of Streets.—La Dame d'Aprigny.—Jean Pataye.—St. Gerbold.—Procès-verbal.—The Fairy of Argouges.—Jeanne Bacon.

WHEN the Rue St. Quintin, leading to the bridge of Isbert or Trubert, was in its original state, a legend was attached to it which the altered state of the street, now widened and repaved, has probably effaced. Formerly it was narrow, high, crooked, and dark. About midnight, whoever ventured to pass down it was met by a fairy who was called La Dame d'Aprigny. She approached the daring stranger who intruded on her dominions and presented him her hand with a courteous gesture: if he was bold enough to accept it she danced gravely along with him for some minutes without speaking, then made him a profound courtesy and disappeared. If he was timid or imprudent enough

to refuse her offered civility, the indignant fairy seized and plunged him into the neighbouring moat, where sometimes her victims perished or with the greatest difficulty scrambled out of the abyss, torn with the thorns and brambles, wet and bruised, and terrified to death.

The circumstances related in the following legend have been recounted of other personages, and the scene placed in other towns; yet are they so circumstantially told of this locality, that there is every probability that they occurred here, *if any where.*

JEAN PATYE;

OR, THE CANON WHO RODE THE DEVIL.

FROM time immemorial the chapter of Bayeux was obliged, in reparation of some ancient offence, to send one of its canons every year to Rome to assist in singing the midnight high mass, or in case of failure a very heavy fine was imposed. In the course of time it came to the turn of Jean Patye, canon of the prebendary of Cambremer, to perform this duty. Due notice was given him, according to custom, several months beforehand, but he paid so little attention to the subject that on the Christmas-eve

of the year 1537, he was still at Bayeux. He was reproached by his brethren for his negligence, but answered by entreating them to give themselves no uneasiness, for that his intention was to go to Rome, that he should return, and that there should be no cause for dissatisfaction with any party.

This appeared inexplicable enough to the convent, but no questions were asked, and Jean the canon retired to his chamber, when opening his conjuring-book, he invoked the devil, with whom he had long been in habits of communication. "I require of thee," he said, "to carry me this night to Rome, and my journey there must be as quick as a woman's thought—that is to say, swifter than the wind. Wait for me beneath the portcullis, and when the clock strikes nine I shall be on your back."

Accordingly, the canon attended matins as usual, and having sung the *Domine labia*, he slipped away, and finding his mysterious steed at the place agreed on, mounted, and in the twinkling of an eye was high in the air with the sea beneath him; then the tempter addressed the canon artfully advising him to make the sign of the cross, these were his words:—

"Signa te, signa temere, me tangis et angis,
Roma tibi subitò motibus, ibit amor."

This infernal distich, which may be read from right to left, or from left to right, without altering the sense, had no effect on Jean Patye, who merely replied, "Go on, that which the devil carries is always well carried." On they went without stop or stay, and the Eternal city was soon reached. They were singing the *introït* of the midnight mass when the traveller arrived: he left the devil at the church gate, desiring him to wait his return. He sang the epistle, which was the portion of the service required of the Bayeux priest, and then entering the sacristy he requested to be allowed to see the original document by virtue of which this service was required by the church of Rome. No objection was made to this; he took the paper in his hand, and while appearing to be examining it he suddenly threw it into the fire, where it was instantly consumed.

The consternation of the Roman priests was excessive on witnessing the daring conduct of this bold Norman; and before they could recover themselves, he had quitted the sacristy and the church, and leaping on the back of his charger was again *en route*.

In the cathedral of Bayeux they were singing *laudes* when Jean Patye appeared amongst them; he had himself begun *matins*, therefore his absence had been less than four hours! His brethren

thought he had returned from taking a nap, but he assured them that he was come from Rome, where he had sung the epistle, and more than all, had destroyed the paper which obliged them to this inconvenient service, from which they were henceforth delivered.

However much rejoiced the whole chapter might be at this emancipation, the means by which it had been accomplished could scarcely be looked upon as altogether orthodox. The canon himself was aware that considerable sin attached to his conduct, and began to consider what had best be done to clear himself. As these things are, however, not difficult to manage with proper method, the clergy consulted together, and a solemn general procession was agreed upon, in which the canon should walk barefooted, having a cord about his neck, in order to entitle him to absolution. This was accordingly done, and on the earnest entreaty of Augustin de Trivulce, bishop of Bayeux, the little peccadillo of Jean Patye was forgiven by the Pope, and the good priests were left to congratulate themselves on the happy ending of their bold brother's dangerous ride.

Another diabolic story is told as having happened at Bayeux, the features of which are pre-

cisely the same as those of Cornelius Agrippa's "Young Man," whose studies got him into so fatal a scrape with his Satanic majesty, except that in this, the *curé* enters in time to save the imprudent scholar from the claws of the demon.

The following, which is characteristic of the age, is called

THE LEGEND OF ST. GERBOLD.

St. Gerbold was a celebrated bishop of Bayeux, to whom the country was indebted for a great variety of miracles. He had passed his youth in England under the roof of a certain great man, and an adventure similar to that of Joseph was the cause of his leaving it, which he did in a manner still less agreeable; for his irritated master caused a millstone to be hung round his neck, and had him cast into the sea. No sooner, however, was he in the water, than the stone became as light as a cork, the cord gave way, and the saint, placing himself comfortably on his novel species of boat, quietly pursued his way to the coast of Normandy.

He landed at Ver in the very depth of a severe winter, but wherever he set his foot fresh flowers sprung up in profusion, and soft airs

blew: since that time the name of Ver was given to the spot. He established himself at Crésson, on the banks of the stream of Provence, and there built a little hermitage.

When his sanctity and the wondrous miracles he performed had raised St. Gerbold to the see of Bayeux, and he went to take possession, the streets through which he passed were suddenly miraculously strewn with the rarest and most odoriferous flowers. Nevertheless, the ill-conditioned and ungrateful inhabitants, who probably had no taste at that time for flowers, though they certainly have at the present day, for the finest gardens abound in every part of the town—got tired of their good bishop, and drove him with insult from his palace. St. Gerbold, justly incensed, threw his pastoral ring into the sea, declaring that he would never resume the duties of his diocese till that ring was found. During his absence the inhabitants of Bayeux were afflicted with severe maladies; they then discovered their error, and penitently entreated St. Gerbold to return amongst them. He had compassion on their misfortunes, and having opportunely found his ring in the body of a fish served at his table, he consented to re-enter their town, and the malady, of course, ceased.

At the period of the Revolution of 1794, not only were all the relics of all the saints, in which Bayeux was rich, destroyed, but the bitterest contempt was thrown upon them. The procès-verbal which consigned them to destruction is so characteristic that it may be amusing to look it over; had the superstition against which it enveighs been replaced by something more *reasonable* than the *reign of Reason*, it would be impossible to regret their removal; or if the judges on the occasion had been less the enemies of religion itself, as well as of order and decency, it would be calculated to excite risibility. After a preamble in their peculiar jargon, the procès-verbal goes on to say,—

"— La commune de Corbeil, jalouse d'être comptée au nombre des communes de la République qui les premières rendirent un hommage solennel à la Raison, s'était empressée de briser l'idole monstrueuse d'une révélation inintelligible, et de secouer le joug honteux de la superstition, en envoyant à la Convention Nationale le reste des hochets ridicules du fanatisme; elle y avait joint une châsse fameuse de vermeil, que jusques là on avait prétendu renfermer les os d'un grand saint (Spire ou Exupère). Ces restes d'un cadavre infect avaient été jettés, avec quelques autres morceaux de mauvaises momies de semblable

espèce, dans la poussière d'un galetas ecclésiastique ; on paraissait n'y plus penser. Cependant la société populaire de Corbeil, toujours surveillante, semblait craindre que quelques imposteurs sacrés n'argumentassent un jour de la non-destruction de ces os pourris, pour en reproduire d'autres sous le nom de prétendus saints avec lesquels ils ont fait de ridicules jongleries. Elle avait arrêté, en conséquence, que, dans une fête civique qui sera célébrée ce-jourd'hui, tous ces restes immondes seraient, jusqu'au plus petit vestige, consumés par le feu sur la place publique.

" D'après cet arrêt, la force armée, requise par la municipalité, a pris les armes. Le maire, les officiers municipaux, l'agent national de la commune, et le président de la societé populaire, accompagnés du secrétaire-greffier de la municipalité, se sont rendus à deux heures de relevée dans la ci-devant église de Saint Spire, à présent le temple de la Raison. Les ossemens des prétendus Saints Exupère, St. Guenault, St. Quirin, St. Loup, St. Regnobert, St. Yon, et d'une foule d'autres *de même fabrique*, ont été retirés du galetas où ils avaient été jettés ; ils ont été chargés dans un tombereau, et conduits sur la place de la Révolution, lieu où se font les exécutions de justice. Ils ont été mis sur un bucher, qui avait été dressé à cet effet, et y

ont été reduits en cendres, ainsi que les linges et les boîtes qui les renfermaient, en présence du peuple, qui faisait retentir l'air de cris réitérés de Vive la République ! Vive la Nation ! Après que le feu eut tout consumé, les cendres furent chargés dans le même tombereau, et conduites par le même cortége sur la grande arche du pont sur la rivière de Seine, d'où elles furent jettées dans la rivière aux mêmes acclamations du peuple."

The belief in the fairy of Argouges who haunts the castle of that name is not entirely worn out, though a few stones alone remain of the walls where she once resided. The story, which has some poetical beauties, is thus related.

THE FAIRY OF ARGOUGES.

THERE was once a great lord of Argouges near Bayeux who was protected by a fairy. Wherever he went, in whatever battle or adventure he engaged, he was sure to be victorious, for she was always at hand to assist him: he had never seen her, but had only heard her very sweet voice calling to him and warning and directing him. He became so accustomed to

this, that at last he would never undertake anything without waiting for her voice, which she never withheld when invoked. He was young, handsome, and very amiable; his only defect was an impatience of temper which he could not always control.

Though many of the neighbouring nobles were desirous of allying themselves with him, and had offered their daughters in marriage, he had always declined, feeling no inclination for any of the fair dames who showed themselves so anxious to please him. He avoided society, and by degrees shut himself up from all communication with the world; for a secret sadness preyed on his mind, which he would impart to none, and feared might be discovered. He had become enamoured of the ideal beauty of his fairy protectress, and he pined away in hopeless longings to behold her. He did not dare to name his distress to her, in the fear of exciting her anger, and at last he ceased to call upon her name, or to ask her assistance in his projects; or rather, he had no heart to undertake any action whatever, being totally absorbed by his grief and his love. There was a retired spot near his castle in the midst of a wood, beside a bright fountain which gushed from between the rocks, and fell in trickling streams from one descent to another, forming a

shower of tears at last, which dropped on the green turf at his feet. Here he would lie for hours, giving himself up to melancholy reflections and regret, and sing the most mournful songs, one of which may be rendered as follows.

"Thou art to me less than a shade
By fragile leaves of autumn made,
Less than the note of some lone bird
Midst early spring's first whispers heard,
A weed, a feather on the sea,
All this—and less thou art to me.

Why does my trembling fancy dwell
On all that shapes thy form too well?
Why see, where'er I turn, thine eyes
Haunting the streams, the woods, the skies!
Although I know that mortal love
Thy nature must be far above,—
Less than a kiss in sleep am I,
Thou canst not to my prayer reply!
I know all hope thy love to gain
Is idle weakness, fond and vain,
As vain to look for clouds past by,
As vain to gaze on vacancy;
But were it fonder, vainer yet
I cannot that wild dream forget!"

Sometimes, as his song ceased, he imagined he heard near him a low sobbing and sometimes a plaintive cry, to which he felt a secret pleasure in listening, although it might be only the breeze amongst the branches, or the falling of the water-

drops. One evening, as he approached his accustomed retreat, he was aware that a female was leaning against the projecting rock, and he paused a moment to observe her.

She was small and beautifully formed, with eyes so brilliant that it was almost impossible to gaze upon them: her dress was of a texture like that of film, which floats in the air on summer evenings,—it had a shadowy hue like the white clouds that flit along the sky through which the blue of the wide expanse is shining; her shoulders were covered with embroidery of all colours, such as those which appear when the sun is setting, intermixed with gems of different hues; a sash of rainbow tints bound her waist, the fringe of which was of a metal like the appearance of the full moon in the month of harvest, neither gold nor silver, but richer than either. She wore on her feet buskins that glittered like water or dew. On her head was a tiara of jewels, and her fair hair was so fine that the wind waved it about in long wreaths, like the tendrils of the wild vine. She was singing, and these were the words of her song.

"I am not of thy race,
But a spirit pure and free,
Whose changeful dwelling place
Is cloud and air and sea;

But I love thee, and I fly,
To the shades of earth I rove,
All is endless misery
But where thou art and love!"

He was inexpressibly astonished when he beheld this vision, and hurried forward to throw himself at her feet, but in an instant she was gone, and the space was vacant by the fountain where she had been. He was not long, however, in the state of disappointment into which this disappearance had thrown him, for he heard a soft voice close to him address him thus.

"Thou hast heard my confession, and if I am dear to thee, thou hast only to invoke my presence and I shall appear; we will be united, and thou shalt bear me home as thy bride; but I must impose a condition on thee, never by any chance to name in my hearing the word DEATH, for if thou shouldst, I must quit thee immediately."

The lord of Argouges smiled at the easy way in which he was to retain his bride, and he spared neither protestations nor persuasions to induce her to appear; and much surprised were all his neighbours and vassals when he brought home to them the most beautiful lady that had ever been seen, no one knew from whence. At first they were inclined to treat her with scorn, and jealousy created for her many enemies; but when,

after a short time, the bride's dower arrived, loading teams and caravans and mules and horses till the procession reached for several leagues beyond the castle walls, there was not one person who was not altogether awed by the magnificence and riches she displayed, and nothing but praises and civilities were showered upon her. Nothing of this, however, appeared to have any effect on the beautiful fairy's mind, all her attention and devotion was lavished on her husband, who quite adored her, and nothing could pass more happily than their lives, for neither had a wish ungratified.

One day they were preparing to attend a grand tournament at Bayeux, where the bravest knights of Normandy and Brittany were to appear, and where the Lord of Argouges was to tilt in honour of his lady. She had retired into her own chamber, and contrary to her usual custom had requested her lord not to disturb her, but that the moment she was ready she would descend. The fact is that she was preparing a magical scarf which, bound round his bosom, would secure to him the victory over all in the tournament, but it required a particular moment to render the charm complete.

The snow-white palfrey which was to carry her was already at the portal; the train was all in

attendance, and her lord was standing impatiently beside his pawing steed: but still the lady delayed; he called to her, and as he caught a glimpse of her figure at the turret window, he begged her to descend: she answered not, but appeared to be standing immovable; the impatience of his temper got the better of his discretion, and he exclaimed, "For the love of the saints, beautiful wife, come down! By heaven! you would be the best messenger one could send in search of DEATH for you are so long coming!"

Hardly had he pronounced the fatal word when he became aware of his imprudence,—a cold horror crept over him, and he raised his eyes with fearful expectation towards the turret. His lovely wife stood there, but it was but for a moment; the casement was flung violently open, a clap of thunder shook the castle, and a sound as of the rushing of innumerable wings past by him, laughter and shrieks filled the air, the sky suddenly became dark and concealed the fairy from his view. When the clouds cleared away she was there no longer, but on the front of the castle above the principal entrance was the *mark of a hand imprinted deep in the stone.* The impression of that hand remained for ever, but the lady was never seen again as she had been. Every night, however, she wandered round and round the

castle shrieking and crying, and the words she constantly uttered were "La mort! La mort!" but no one could meet her, no one could fix her in their sight; when they gazed in one place, where she appeared, her shadowy form, through which the stars shone, was beheld in another spot.

The lord of Argouges became now a melancholy man indeed, and all happiness departed from him; he neglected his castle, his vassals, himself, and passed all his time by the side of the fountain where he had first seen his fairy bride, bewailing his rashness and impatience. A neighbouring baron, who was known throughout the country as an oppressor and tyrant, who was an enemy to all good, and a worker of every species of ill, hearing of the unfortunate knight's careless despondency, resolved to make himself master of his castle and estates. Accordingly he armed himself *cap-à-piè*, and proceeded to the wood with an intention of slaying the Lord of Argouges; but the protection of the fairy had not ceased, and she warned her lover, as in old times, of the approaching danger. The baron, who was of prodigious strength and gigantic stature, thought to make so dispirited a foe an easy prey, but was attacked himself with a vigour that amazed him, and after a desperate combat the

lord of Argouges returned to his castle a conqueror, having left his antagonist dead by the fountain side.

He lived several years after this event, but never took another wife, and on his decease his castle and estates went to a younger brother. Since then the only time when the fairy appears wandering near the castle of Argouges is when one of the family is about to die, then in the dead of night her shriek is heard, and the fatal cry of "La mort! La mort!" echoes from turret to turret and dies away in the distance. The mark of the hand was never effaced from the stone, and if time has cast it among the ruins, and common eyes cannot distinguish it, it is still there, and will be as long as a vestige of the castle remains.

Two circumstances seem to have given rise to this fanciful tradition. One is the victory gained by Robert of Argouges over a German of gigantic stature called Brun, during the siege of Bayeux, under Henry I. in 1106; the other is that the arms of the family of Argouges have for a crest FAITH represented as a naked female figure, with the device or *cri de guerre*, "*à la fé! à la fé!*" which the people understood and pronounced *à la fée.*

Not far from Bayeux is Molley, which place has furnished a heroine to the neighbourhood in the châtelaine of the castle, Jeanne Bacon. Of her are recounted many chivalrous adventures; one of them is sufficiently marvellous. She had been threatened with a siege by some enemies, during her husband's absence, (he having been taken prisoner on the high seas by the Danes,) and resolved to defend herself to the last. Being as good and pious as she was beautiful and valiant, as she stood on the donjon tower of her Castle of Molley, armed at all points, and waiting for the attack, she addressed her prayers to God that he would accord her the grace to see her foes approach.

Immediately "the wood began to move!" the extensive Bois de la Plège was seen in a state of agitation, and by degrees tree after tree advanced from its place and took up its position on the opposite side of the road so as to afford a clear view of the way by which the besieging army would advance. Thus miraculously assisted she was enabled to take such measures that when the hostile troops arrived, headed by one of her husband's most inveterate enemies, she met them at advantage, and drove them discomfited from her walls.

So much was she respected in these parts that

all the inhabitants of Molley and the communes round resolved to raise amongst them the sum requisite to pay her husband's ransom, which was done. To reward them, the châtelaine granted them lands, marshes, woods and heaths to be enjoyed by them in common.

When this liberal, brave, and virtuous lady lived, does not appear; nevertheless the tradition is not entirely void of foundation, inasmuch as Jeanne Bacon was the daughter of Roger Bacon, and one of the greatest heiresses of her time. She had many suitors and was twice married, and her life was one of continual agitation. She died without issue in 1376, and was buried in the monastery of St. Evroult, which she had largely endowed.*

* Anno domini 1376, obiit nobilis domina de Moleyo, soror nostra quæ donavit feoda de *Jouveaux et d'Asnières* cum jure patronatus dictarum ecclesiarum cum omnibus pertinentiis.

Nécrologe de l'Abbaye de St. Evroult.

BRANCH OFFICE ASIATIC

CHAPTER III.

Le Bessin.—Hidden treasure.—Le Letiche.—Loup Garou.—The Bête.—Superstitions.—Twelfth Night.—St. Lo.—Money-changers.—The Cathedral.—Stone Pulpit.—Consecrated Well.—The Capitals.—St. Croix.—French politeness.—Livre Vert.—Coutances.—Cathedral.

THE last town in Normandy where the Danish language was preserved, was at Bayeux. This part of the country, so rich in traditional lore, preserves some of its customs and habits, which are peculiar. As may easily be supposed, the great hero of their tales is Duke William, or as he is called, "le Roi Guillemot;" every ruined château you see is one belonging to him, every mutilated statue is his, every church was built by him. At Rye the road is pointed out to the traveller where William passed on his flight from Valognes to Falaise, and if you desire it, the place can be indicated where his horse was re-shod.

A strong belief exists amongst the people of the existence of hidden treasure in the ground beneath the ruined churches and castles so abundant in their neighbourhood, but they are supposed to be guarded by supernatural means. As late as 1827, persons have been found credulous enough to follow the directions of a Dousterswivel, and employ much useless time and labour in searching after imaginary riches beneath the stones in front of the cathedral.

It is true, however, that some fortunate persons have very recently found in a garden at St. Honorine des Pertes an earthen pot containing from two to three hundred pieces of gold, of the times of Charles VII. and VIII, Louis XII. and Francis I. About the same period, namely, in 1830, more than eight hundred pieces of brass coin were discovered, which had been struck in France by the English in 1430, and still later some workmen, in cutting down a part of the wood of St. Vaast, near Tilly, found a large quantity of gold pieces of the reign of King John and his successors.

One of the superstitions still current relates to a being called a *Letiche*. It is an animal whose form is scarcely defined, of dazzling whiteness, which is seen only in the night time, and disappears the moment any one attempts to touch it. They are believed to be the souls of infants

dead without baptism: most probably this pretty little spirit was no other than the agile and timid ermine of Normandy and Brittany.

Among other imaginations is the belief in a phantom in the form of a wolf, who wanders about at night amongst graves. The chief of the band is a large black one; if they are approached, the leader rises on his hind legs and begins to howl, when the whole party disappear shrieking out, "Robert is dead! Robert is dead!" It would be curious to trace the origin of this fable, which is probably connected with an historical event.

The famous superstition of the Loup-garou, so well known to the learned in early tradition, is even yet not entirely worn out in the Bessin, though I have risked offending on several occasions by too minute inquiries among the lower orders in Normandy, hoping to hear some detailed account of this mysterious animal, who I doubt not may yet be discovered in his original clime of Bretagne, where he formerly reigned in unquestioned terror.

It is possible that the whole legend arose from the fact of certain crimes being denounced in the ancient laws of Normandy, and the punishment commanded thus expressed, "the guilty shall be looked upon as a wolf," *i. e.* pursued, and

killed if found, as any dangerous beast might be. Allegory, in law matters, seems to have been rather dangerous amongst so imaginative a people, and for ages the horrible Loup-garou has maintained his fearful existence.

The town of Bayeux is indebted to a saint whose relics, amongst the rest, were treated so unceremoniously at the Revolution, whose name is repeated, and to whom churches and chapels have been built, in every bourg and village in France, for delivery from a *bête* probably of the description above mentioned. One of these monsters ravaged the neighbourhood and penetrated into the faubourg. St. Loup, then bishop, at length sallied out, resolved to put an end to his devastations, and succeeded in fascinating him first by his glance, then throwing his stole over the beast's head he drowned him in the Drôme. The place is still shown where the saint performed this miracle, and the church where in bas-relief the whole is represented on the portal; even now, however (or probably before the Revolution), the *bête* occasionally comes at night and is heard howling round the church, but he does no harm.

It is believed that if a death occur in a house the only method to secure the safety of the bees is to hang a black rag over the hives, otherwise

they will die in nine days. On Christmas night animals are supposed to have the power of speaking together. The toad, so far from being looked upon as a venomous animal, is called "the friend of man," as it is thought to warn people asleep in a wood of the vicinity of snakes; its bitter enemy is the lizard, of a sort considered venomous, with which it has frequently deadly encounters. It is thought that if a person, at a certain period of the moon, stifles a mole in his hand, he will have the power to cure maladies by a touch of this hand; this power is called *La main taupée.* A mole-skin is often hung round a child's neck to assist its teeth.

A custom still prevails in the neighbourhood of Bayeux on Twelfth-night:—A child is hidden under the table on which the cake is cut, of whom the guests inquire, "Whose share is this?" he replies by naming successively all the company, not omitting the share appropriated to God, which is reserved for the first poor person who appears. If any of the family be absent, his share is carefully put by; if he remains well, the cake continues fresh; if ill, it begins to be moist; if he dies, the cake becomes bad. Not many years since it was a fashion amongst the *bourgeoisie* to go from house to house among their friends asking for "*la part à Dieu,*" to the sound

of the violin, singing verses made for the occasion.

It was a lovely evening when we quitted Bayeux and the country became more and more beautiful, justifying the pretension which is claimed for Lower Normandy. Half way to St. Lo we entered the forest of Cerisy, where our course lay for upwards of six miles, with a dense mass of wood on either side, occasionally relieved by long vistas through which the rays of the setting sun were streaming. The road is remarkably fine and wide, and the stillness of the evening and the solitude of the spot threw an inexpressible charm over the scene. The forest of Cerisy is of great extent, seven leagues at least, in circumference, and contains a great deal of game, both deer and wild boar, and the privilege of hunting is fully enjoyed by several opulent landholdhers of the district.

At the further extremity of the forest we quitted the department of Calvados and entered that of La Manche, and from one of the heights on this hilly road we shortly caught a glimpse of the lofty spires of Notre Dame de St. Lo. It was dark when we arrived there, and not liking the appearance of the inn where the diligence stopped, we drove on in hopes of finding a better; but this being an impossibility, we were

obliged to retrace our steps, and were fain to content ourselves with the place we had originally slighted, though the accommodation was sufficiently poor. *Soit dit en passant,* all the inns along this line of road are extremely bad,—a quality which reaches its height when you arrive at Granville; the beds are, however, always an exception.

We were not a little entertained at breakfast next morning by the relation of an adventure of a gentleman of our party, who requiring some English money changed, and of course anticipating no difficulty in a large town like St. Lo, had sallied forth on that errand. At the first goldsmith's shop he entered, (the usual places of exchange,) he was told that there were no money changers in the town; at the second he was directed to a third, where a young girl of sixteen, the professed factotum of the shop, as girls generally are in France, came forward and answered his inquiry in the affirmative. He accordingly produced a few sovereigns, for which he requested five franc pieces. The *demoiselle* took them up one by one, looked at them very wistfully, put them down again, drew out a pair of scales, pulled forth a large quarto volume full of engravings, and began to study it very attentively. It was a treatise on numismatics, published, as the type and binding of the book proclaimed, about

the middle of the last century, and contained effigies of all the coins current at that time throughout the world, with the weight and value of each. After turning over a great many pages, and then fixing her eyes on the one where English coins were depicted, she exclaimed with an air of satisfaction, "*Ah! ce sont des guinées!*" and then proceeded to weigh the mysterious pieces of money, which she seemed doubtful might turn, like fairy gold, into leaves as soon as he was gone. Our friend explained to her that there were no such things now as guineas in circulation; that these were sovereigns,—worth so much less,—mentioned their value, and explained that no premium was wanted. The young money-changer was silent for a little while; at last she said with some hesitation, that her papa was not at home, and that she "was ignorance itself in this," but if he would leave her one of the sovereigns she would send it to her parent, who was only gone a few miles into the country, and when she knew the weight and value of one coin she could easily calculate what they would all come to.

He ventured to decline this proposition, as it involved a period of time of somewhat doubtful length, and a result of some uncertainty, alleging as his excuse his proposed departure immedi-

ately, observing merely that apparently there was not much commerce at St. Lo in affairs of this nature. "Oh no, Monsieur," said she, "very little indeed, for if there were I should have known all about it." Our friend therefore made his bow to the little Jessica, and soon after effected his purpose at the bureau of the *messagerie*, without further difficulty.

In all the Norman towns, the cathedral or principal church is the chief attraction. That of St. Lo is very fine, though inferior to Bayeux. It is said to be a copy of the cathedral of Coutances, but I know not on what ground, as I could trace no resemblance. The western front is very richly and elaborately sculptured, and the moulding of leaves and flowers on the south side is exquisite. On the north side is a stone pulpit of very beautiful form, projecting over the street. From thence, probably, the priest blessed the cattle on the fête of St. Martin. Within the church there is another peculiarity, a well of consecrated water about twenty feet deep: it is situated close to one of the chapels, in the apsis, behind the grand altar. The stained glass, though it has suffered in many of the windows, and is pieced irregularly, is of a very beautiful colour, and many of the figures, in the costume of the fifteenth century, are quite

perfect. The columns which support the nave are very massive, and are without capitals, the arches springing from the shaft. We were speaking of this peculiarity afterwards in a bookseller's shop hard by, the owner of which had exhibited great interest in our opinion; but he evidently thought we were depreciating the beauties of his cathedral by the remark, and with great importance remarked that though there might be no *capitals* to the columns on ordinary occasions, "*C'est possible qu'on ne les met que les jours de fête.*"

The old church of St. Croix, a relic of the 9th century, is in very good preservation, though the interior is disfigured by being covered with a bright yellow wash. There is some curious sculpture over the western entrance, but only a portion of the original door now remains.

We were desirous of seeing the public library, and proceeded to the college where it is situated. The librarian was just gone, but one of the professors who was standing in the court-yard, and became aware of our wishes, informed us where he lived, and though he admitted that there were no manuscripts and few books, he added that our wishes would, no doubt, be gratified. This mode of expressing himself was characteristic of his nation: "*Monsieur*," said

he addressing himself to the gentleman who accompanied me, "*c'est un plaisir. Madame,*" he added, turning to me, "*c'est un devoir.*" The distinction was nicely drawn.

We found the librarian a very obliging agreeable man; he regretted that he had nothing to show us worthy our attention, and explained that when Napoleon restored order to the churches and public edifices after the Revolution, he centralized all the manuscripts and choicest books in the public library at Avranches. To us this was no disappointment, for thither we were bound.

We inquired respecting a cartulary called the "*Livre Vert,*" of which we had formerly heard, and found that it had answered at least one good purpose. A certain abbé of the diocese was, a few years since, at variance with his suffragan and brother canons, and nothing could heal the difference: they even threatened him with expulsion from their community. When things were at the worst, the abbé luckily stumbled upon the *Livre Vert,* and finding it to contain much which threw disrepute upon many of the acts of the former clergy of the diocese, and unfolded many secrets which it was desirable should not be made known, he threatened to publish the volume. This brought the chapter to reason,

his demands, previously withstood, were acceded to, friendship restored, and the *Livre Vert* continues a sealed book to this hour.

We took leave of the very polite librarian, M. Chuquet, with much gratitude for his urbanity; and when we had sufficiently perambulated the picturesquely situated town of St. Lo, which is so built on a hill that those who live on the highest part can throw a biscuit into their inferior neighbour's *pot au feu* down the chimney, we set out for Coutances, which we reached about five o'clock in the evening, and remained only long enough to see the cathedral and carry away the impression that it is one of the most beautiful in Normandy.

The lightness and grace of the clusters of slender columns which support the roof, the delicacy of the sculpture, and the beauty of the stained glass, produce an effect that is not exceeded, and scarcely equalled in any cathedral in France. As to the town of Coutances, we quitted it without regret; it is close, dirty, and irregular; and when we reached the hill from whence the view of the cathedral is so fine, the freshness of the sea air, now sensibly perceptible, was a welcome exchange for the odours of the ancient town.

CHAPTER IV.

Granville. — Church Costume. — Avranches.—Mont St. Michel. — Breton Legend of Mont St. Michel. — The Avranchin.— Place Huet.— King Arthur's Niece.—The Mounts. — The Captive. — The Monk. — The Sands. — The Iron Cage.—Oubliettes.—La jeune France.

N the appearance of Granville, approaching from Coutances, there is something extremely picturesque. At a distance the upper town only is seen, standing on a fine bold promontory, with its high walls crowning the precipitous rock on which the town is built, its pyramidal groups of houses, and the old church and lighthouse rising above the whole. On either hand, as far as the eye can reach, stretches the sea, the coast of La Manche forming the boundary on one side, and the distant shores of Brittany first discernible across the Bay of Granville, marking their faint outline on the other. On a nearer approach a wide valley sud-

denly presents itself, the road winds abruptly down a very steep hill, the lower town spreads itself at our feet, and the harbour lies before us.

While we were yet distant from the town all this seemed very beautiful, but there is a wide difference between the semblance and the reality. Granville is a *place forte*, and on this account the faubourg, where the greater part of its large population must live, exists merely on sufferance, and no embellishment in the shape of lofty buildings, wide streets, or commodious edifices, is permitted, lest the exigencies of war should call for their destruction, and interfere with the defences of the place. There might have been some reason for this in former days, but in the present mode of warfare, the possession of the faubourg of Granville would be of little service to the besiegers.

All the inns are equally detestable.

The view from the upper town is exceedingly fine, but there is nothing in it worth notice save the church.

This is a fine old grey building, of the early Norman period, low and massive in its architecture, sombre and imposing in its effect. It is little decorated, either internally or externally, but a grave simplicity harmonizes better with the scene. The lateness of the hour as we entered

its dark aisles added much to the effect. The vesper service was nearly over, two tapers on the high altar cast a feeble ray through the gloom, the waning light of day struggled faintly through the narrow windows, and the kneeling congregation were hushed in silence and prayer.

We would gladly have lingered, but the service shortly concluded, and we went out with the crowd, admiring not only the costume but the personal appearance of the fair devotees. The women of Granville are extremely pretty, more so, I think, than in those parts of Lower Normandy where their beauty is so much vaunted; they possess greater delicacy of complexion and more regularity of feature. Their costume, which is quite peculiar to Granville, and resembles no other in Normandy, tends much to set them off. Their head-dress, which is so distinguishing a part, is not of the extravagant height or fantastic shape retained since the fifteenth century throughout the province, but more resembles that of a far earlier period, and assimilates very much to the oriental form, consisting of folds of fine linen, piled like a turban, with a broad flounce or frill, surrounding features of remarkable beauty. Above their ordinary dress they all wear, when they go out, what they term a "*capot*" of black serge or stuff, or perhaps of silk; it is like a man-

tilla, and attached to it is a hood, which either falls behind, or is drawn at pleasure over their head. In this array, with their pretty figures and quick elastic step, their appearance is much more like that of Spanish than French women, and one cannot help thinking that a colony from Cadiz must once have left their costume and some of their features behind them.

At an early hour we were again *en route* for Avranches, distant only six leagues. In a short time we entered a very pretty country,—for round Granville the soil is wild and barren,—and at the half-way village of Sartilly the appearance of the woods and fields almost persuaded us that we were still in England. Nor was this effect diminished on approaching Avranches, though I know of no English town that stands so well. Had not its cathedral been destroyed in the first Revolution it would have wanted nothing to be perfect. The town stands on the northern extremity of a high ridge, sloping on three sides, rather abruptly, amidst hanging woods, into a finely cultivated amphitheatre.

Standing on the "place" where the cathedral formerly stood, a thickly wooded country spread beneath, watered by shining streams, and strewed with verdant meadows, while towards the south-west, the *embouchures*, and winding sands of three

rivers are seen, and, rising proudly from the sea, the rock of Tombelène, and the fortress of Mont St. Michel, rivet our attention. This was one of the most striking views we had seen; more stupendous scenery meets the eye in the Alps and Pyrenees, but scarcely any more beautiful than this, which owes its peculiar charm to its great variety.

Independently of the beauty of its situation, the pure air, clean streets, and the number of convenient houses which have recently been erected, render it a most desirable place of residence: and hither the English have flocked in great numbers; nor for those who seek health, and study economy, could a better selection be made.

Having enjoyed the day in the beautiful environs of Avranches, we set out the next morning, in a capacious cabriolet, for Mont St. Michel, the great lion of the neighbourhood. For about two leagues the route is along the high road to Pontorson, and then it turns suddenly to the right, and an execrable *chemin de traverse* presents itself. Cross-roads are doubtful blessings everywhere; in France there is no doubt about them, and, except that they *sometimes* lead to where you want to go, the term might safely be reversed. Abusing them, as was natural, the driver

very quietly said, "Ah, you think them bad now; you should come here in winter." An experiment which would require more eloquence than his to persuade us to attempt.

At length, after much jolting, and feeling something very like dislocation in every limb, we got upon the broad bed of sand, which, at low water, divides the rock of Mont St. Michel from the main land. It was about mid-day, and the rays of the sun beat down fiercely upon the glaring expanse of sand, hot as the deserts of Arabia, and not a breeze stirring in the air. Enduring this as well as we might, we made the best of our way across, in effecting which we occupied more time than we had anticipated, being deceived very much by the apparent proximity of the fortress. At last, after fording two or three small streams, which trickle through the sands, we reached the walls of Mont St. Michel.

The singularly picturesque appearance of this famous fortress would alone render it worthy a long pilgrimage, "if," as Cotman observes, "religion, history, poetry, and painting, had not all united in giving celebrity to St. Michael's Mount." At the entrance to the town we took a guide and slowly ascended the battlements, pausing at the foot of many a toilsome flight of steps to gaze on the beautiful coast, to admire the stupendous

height of the prison towers above us, and to listen to the descriptions of our loquacious conductress. She pointed out to us the *cachots* where the state prisoners had been confined, and detailed the account of the escape of M. Colombat, above five years since, from a height at which we shuddered to look. Out of a party of six he was the only successful one; the rest were retaken, but he effected his escape into Belgium. The amnesty has since liberated all; but even while I write the dungeons are opened anew to receive some of the prisoners implicated in the recent disturbances of May. After climbing round the walls for about half an hour we paused beneath the principal prison, or "Cour de Plomb," to enjoy in the shade the beautiful view of the shores of Brittany, the "Rochers de Cancale," forming the extreme point of the coast, and the "gently-heaving" ocean, dotted with white sails, spreading all around. When we had rested here we mounted some more steps, and were admitted through an old portal into a vaulted hall, formerly the "Salle des Chevaliers," now the guard room. Here we waited till permission was obtained from the commandant to view the interior of the fortress, and during this interval we examined a very interesting document, a large sheet of paper mounted on a board, on which

were emblazoned the arms of D'Estouteville and his brave companions, one hundred and nineteen in number, all noble knights of Normandy, who, in the year 1423 threw themselves into Mont St. Michel, and compelled the English forces to raise the siege. Examining the page, I observed one shield, the arms of which were familiar to me, and, reading the name below, I found it to be "de Bâcon," an ancestor, no doubt, of the knightly family in England, and one of great antiquity in Normandy.* We had scarcely finished our inspection when our emissary to the commandant returned to conduct us through the fortress.

The principal objects shown are the church, dedicated to the patron saint whose name has rendered the spot so celebrated, the cloisters, and the *souteraine;* the last a misnomer, as it stands at least three hundred feet above the level of the surrounding country, and is constructed *on* the rock.

The church, which is of early Norman architecture, has lately suffered from fire, but not, in my opinion, to injure the effect, the blackened roof and stained columns being more in keeping with the purposes of the castle than more elaborate ornament or a greater show of decoration.

* See the legend of Jeanne de Bâcon.

Our military guide lamented the destruction of some fine pictures; but from all I have ever seen of the pictures which are set up in the churches of France, I should say he had little cause for regret. The ornaments round the high altar were, however, uninjured, and the quaint old painted carvings were so singular, that we rejoiced in their escape. The subjects represented are, the expulsion from Paradise, the resurrection, "*comment St. Michel occist le démon*," &c., and are about as grotesque as they could possibly have been rendered. They bear a strong resemblance to the adventures of Dagobert in the cathedral of St. Denis.

But if the church be of rude construction, we were amply repaid by the elegance of the cloisters attached to it. They are not mutilated in any part, and the interior of the quadrangle is supported by a triple row of pillars, one hundred and twelve in all, each range of which forms a small aisle, with a beautifully pointed arch,—the most graceful and delicate that can be imagined. I have nowhere seen any cloisters with pillars constructed in this form, and I look upon them to be *unique*.*

* This beautiful cloister was begun by Raoul de Villedieu, abbot of the monastery, in 1220, and was terminated in 1228. It is difficult at the first glance to assign a precise character

From thence we passed through various halls into the souterrain, and then emerged by another door into the *Salle des Chevaliers.* We passed by several chambers where numerous prisoners were at work, but the rules of the fortress are so severe that we were scarcely permitted to glance at the open doorways, much less to inspect the interior. The prison contains at present upwards of six hundred prisoners, condemned for civil offences. In the knights' hall we found our female guide, and returned with her a different way past the smaller church of St. Michael in the town, to the auberge, where, before we set out to return to Avranches, we purchased several very pretty objects in coco, which are sold for the benefit of the prisoners, and of the *intermédiaires!*

The following legend of the Mount is characteristic of the times in which it was believed.

of architecture to this elegant construction, for its lightness, delicacy, and the finish of detail and refined taste it exhibits, scarcely seem to belong to its time: so varied and rich are the sculpture and workmanship of its foliage, and so delicately intricate the combination of its ornaments; but from their peculiar form, only to be met with in the thirteenth century, no doubt can exist of its real date. This charming building, suspended as it seems in mid air, appears to have been placed there to relieve the severity of the rest of the structure.

"BRETON LEGEND OF MONT ST. MICHEL.

"THE church of St. Michel is in a place which is called 'the tomb,' and was built in honour of the Archangel. Now this place is entirely surrounded by the sea, and is very fearful because of the coming on of the tide; not by degrees like other tides, but suddenly with great force, so that those pilgrims who go to pray and seek the grace of the blessed St. Michel, are sometimes overtaken and destroyed by means of the waters.

"Once on a solemn occasion of visiting this holy place, as the company of pilgrims were in the midway among the sands, a poor woman of their number was seized with the pains of childbirth, and unable to proceed, when was heard roaring at a distance the dreadful sound of the sea, and all instantly took to flight, so that this poor woman remained alone. For the great pain that she suffered, and the fear and doubt of her heart when she heard the waves coming, she cried out pitifully for help, but move she could not, and every one ran to save himself, feigning that he heard her not. Now she knew that all aid of man could nought avail her, and she

turned her thoughts to Heaven, weeping with a loud voice and crying upon God and the Virgin Mary, mother of God, and St. Michel his Archangel: and all the people stopped to regard her, she holding her arms to Heaven, so that all the good amongst them prayed for her. It happened to this poor woman that the Mother of Mercy came to her assistance, and cast round her a curtain, and she heard no more the horrible sound of the sea, nor was a single drop of water permitted to touch her vestments, and lying thus as it were in a safe habitation, she brought forth a son, and there stayed till the sea retired, drawing its waves with it, leaving her a way of deliverance. Thus she who had been left alone in the middle of the raging surges was brought safely to the shore. And when all the people saw this great miracle openly before their eyes, they glorified God and the Virgin Mary."

So pleased were we with Avranches and its neighbourhood, that we resolved to remain there for some little time in order to observe its beauties at leisure. There is very agreeable society to be met with there, both English and French, and nothing can exceed the kindness and hospitality with which strangers are welcomed. We have peculiar reason to say this, as we had taken

with us no letters of introduction, society not being our object during our rambling journey; yet we had no obstacles thrown in our way; on the contrary, we found ourselves courted and loaded with attentions of the most flattering description, our tastes and pursuits studied, and every assistance given to our researches. Avranches is rich in its very valuable library, open to all comers, and under the superintendance of a gentleman, M. Alex. Motet, whose urbanity and kindness leave nothing to be desired. Indeed the same spirit seems to animate all the members of the learned society established in this charming town, each vying with the other in friendly offices towards the new-comer who claims their care. The museum of natural history is yet in its infancy, but promises to become of great value; the collection of medals is even now very fine: among the most interesting are many of our early English kings in perfect preservation.

Several French gentlemen residing at Avranches have devoted their leisure to the study of its antiquities, or rather those of its venerable neighbour Mont St. Michel. This singular and mysterious monument supplies the place of all which have in the course of years disappeared, with its once magnificent cathedral, from this

beautiful town; and all inquiries are directed towards the "guarded mount," in the absence of a single church of interest on the spot. The lofty and commanding walls which once rendered it almost impregnable, still remain, however, to attest its former grandeur,—a broad terrace beneath them, on one side opens to the magnificent prospect spread in wondrous variety as far as vision can extend; and above, gardens and houses, all fine and commanding an unequalled view, replace the towers and battlements of old.

In some of the streets antique door-ways speak of its monastic possessions: la Rue des Prêtres is rich in these remains, but so much has been removed and so much is the town improving daily in convenience, that by degrees no doubt these will disappear; there are numerous vaults, however, so solid and so useful for merchants that they will probably always keep their place,—monuments of Roman stability when all besides is swept away.

On the fine platform now called La Place Huet,* at the highest point of the whole town,

* The learned Huet, of whom his townsmen are justly proud, was a native of Avranches. It is proposed to erect a statue of him on the place where the cathedral stood, which idea, it is to be hoped, will be carried into execution. Some public monument is required on the platform, which, if planted

where once stood the stately cathedral, a land-mark for seamen for leagues, there is now to be traced one solitary stone, cleared from the grass and weeds around it: it bears a rudely carved chalice without inscription or ornament. This, it has been asserted, is part of the pavement at the entrance of the cathedral on which Henry II. knelt to expiate by severe penance the crime he had committed by desiring, if not by suggesting, the murder of his haughty and rebellious, but powerful subject, Becket. Every trace but this has passed away of the gorgeous pile where the proud monarch submitted to an indignity which his spirit was little fitted to endure.

Bright and clear amongst the widely extending sands rise, in the extreme distance, with a background of sparkling waves, the two mounts, St. Michel and Tombelène, the object of so much speculation amongst the learned of so many ages. What was their position in former times? Did they stand in the midst of a circle of dark forests far removed from the sea which now washes their feet, and whose resistless might has destroyed all of their possessions but the rock which forms

with trees and adorned with walks, would be a delightful promenade, commanding as it does so splendid a view. No doubt the spirited inhabitants of Avranches will accord in beautifying their charming town by this addition.

them? Antiquaries are divided as to particulars, but agree in supposing that the forest of Scycy or Quokelunde existed in the time of the Druids; that these mounts were sacred to their worship, and that either suddenly or in the course of time the sea had gained upon the vast wooded plain, and left them lonely in the midst of a sandy desert. The great quantity of blackened trees continually found beneath the waters, and far under the sands to an enormous extent, tend to prove the probability of this assertion. The museum of Avranches is enriched with several specimens of these discoveries.

Amongst many learned and somewhat tedious derivations and discussions, on the name and on the purpose of the smaller and sister mount of Tombelène or Tombeleine,* are some more romantic than probable. It is related by an early historian that "King Arthur, being encamped at Harfleur, news was brought to him that a giant of marvellous size and strength, come from Spain, had carried off Helen the niece of King Hoel, his nephew, during his absence, and kept her

* Tumba Beléni appears a natural etymology as it is supposed that both mounts were consecrated to the worship of Belenus, whom the Gauls reverenced as the sun; the same, doubtless, as the Belus of the Assyrians, and the Baal of Scripture, "The fable of Belenus old," and the "Great Vision of the guarded mount," mentioned by Milton.

in durance on the Mont de Tumbe, where now the church of our Lord St. Michel is situated; the which fair maid had died of the terror inspired by this horrible monster, and had been by her nurse buried in a mount hard by. Arthur, indignant at this outrage, sought and combated the giant, whom he slew. Hoel, overcome with grief at the tragical end of his niece Helen, caused a tomb and a chapel to be erected where she lay, which was called 'the maiden's tomb,' and to our days is still named as Tumbe Helène."

Another account relates that a beautiful young lady also named Helen, whose parentage appears unknown, not being able to follow her lover Montgomery, who accompanied William on his expedition to conquer England, died with grief after watching his vessel till she lost it in the distance, and was buried on this rock where she expired.

The shores of Mont St. Michel have been witness to many strange events; not the least tragical is one thus recounted by M. de Roujoux as having taken place in the year 1450.

"Francis I. Duke of Bretagne, conceiving some cause of complaint against his brother Gilles de Bretagne, had closely imprisoned him for several years, loading him with severities and dragging him from dungeon to dungeon. In vain the

unfortunate victim solicited mercy or pardon, the inflexibility of Francis seemed to increase in proportion to his submission. At length, becoming fearful of his escaping him, Francis proposed to the governor of the Château de la Hardouinaye, in which the prisoner was then detained, to get rid of him by poison or the sword; the governor had the courage to refuse, and his noble example was followed by several others to whom the unnatural brother ventured to intimate his wish. The Duke, however, in the end, found three wretches who did not shrink from such an act of villany, and to them he abandoned the devoted captive. They resolved to let the unhappy prince expire of famine, and for that purpose he was placed in a frightful den, such as were so common in most castles of the period, and whose remains horrify the traveller who explores their ruins. Urged by the torments of hunger, the miserable Gilles uttered the most piercing cries and groans as he dragged his emaciated form to the bars of his prison, and from time to time these sounds reached the ears of the startled peasants, whose terror overcame the pity thus excited. A young woman, however, who had heard these groans of agony with deep commiseration, could not resist the impression which they had made on her mind, and notwithstanding the timidity of her nature

and the danger to which she exposed herself, overcoming every obstacle, succeeded under cover of the night, in conveying to the starving being whom she pitied, through the bars of his dungeon, the coarse food which she spared from her daily nourishment; night after night she continued this practice, and shared with him her black bread and her pitcher of water. His murderers, not hearing his cries for some time, imagined that he was dead, and descended to the hideous cell where they expected to find his corpse. Their surprise was extreme on discovering him alive; they could only look upon the circumstance as a kind of miracle, but this belief did not alter their purpose: they administered to their victim a dose of poison, which from some cause produced only the effect, instead of death, of enfeebling him to a dreadful degree; thinking his dissolution near, the prisoner implored the consolations of religion, which were inhumanly refused. Gilles, in utter despair, had recourse to the poor girl, who ceased not to visit him every night; to her he confided his desire, and animated by every excellent feeling, she set about to discover a priest who would venture to accompany her in her perilous midnight task. Such a person she found in a Cordelier, who hesitated not to follow her into the fearful depths

of the fossé, and through the bars of his horrible retreat listened to the confession of the tortured and dying man. When it became necessary to exhort the penitent to accord his pardon to his offending and cruel brother Francis, the priest found all his efforts unavailing. 'No, father,' said the prisoner, 'this is beyond my power. I accuse this inhuman monster: I summon him before my judge and his own. I charge and adjure you, O my father! as soon as I shall be no more, to see Duke Francis; describe to him the horrid state to which his cruelty has condemned me; tell him what torments I have suffered by his order, by his hateful injustice. Tell him that I await the judgment of Heaven upon him. I call upon him in forty days after my death to appear before the Supreme Dispenser of all justice. I challenge him, and you are selected to bear to him my denunciation.'

"A deep groan and a heavy fall told the shuddering priest that the prince had spoken his last; he looked round and saw that day was breaking, and made all the haste he could to reach his convent, where he threw himself at the foot of the altar and entreated the inspiration of God. The assassins meanwhile, supposing that poison had done its work, entered at early morning on the 24th of April 1450, into the dungeon of the

persecuted Gilles, whom they found extended on his wretched pallet still existing, so strangely tenacious was he of a life of misery! Impatient to find so many difficulties in their way, their ferocity assumed the character of mercy, and they put an end to his sufferings by strangulation. The news of his brother's death reached Duke Francis at the moment when the town of Avranches, which he was besieging, had capitulated. The report of this event occasioned great murmurs throughout his camp, suspicions and hints injurious to the Duke began to spread, but the success of the arms of the Bretons, and the glory achieved by the capture of Avranches, by degrees obliterated the memory of the crime. Francis ordered a service for his brother in the church of Mont St. Michel, and testified great sorrow at his loss. Richemont and the principal lords of Bretagne assisted at the ceremony, and, silenced by his apparent sincerity, the Bretons returned without more inquiry to their respective homes.

"While crossing the sands of Mont St. Michel and Tombelène, the Duke, at a distance from the great body of his troops, was merely accompanied by a small band of his immediate followers. His brow became suddenly clouded, dark thoughts seemed to pass through his mind; he observed upon a small eminence of sand close to the path

he was about to take, the form of a Cordelier, who appeared to be waiting to accost him. He advanced to the foot of the mound, when the monk, throwing back the cowl which shaded his features, stepped forward and addressed him thus. 'My lord, I have a mission to you which concerns you nearly.'—'Speak, reverend father,' answered Francis, taking off his helmet as he replied, in order the better to hear, and signing to his attendants to withdraw; 'are you of St. Michel? have I forgotten or neglected any of your community? I give to the altar of your Virgin twenty crowns of gold for its illumination, and to you I grant—'—'Hold,' said the monk, in a solemn voice, 'my business has nought to do with gold or with the world. Hear me! Francis Duke of Bretagne, my liege lord, know that I have heard the confession of Gilles your brother, and I come charged by him to announce that, as contrary to all right, by cruel treatment and injustice from which you allowed him no appeal, you have caused him to perish by a lingering and horrible death, he summons you, in forty days from the day of his decease, to appear in person before God the Creator, to expiate by his terrible justice the griefs and wrongs that you have heaped on him. Thus he who is dead spoke to me, and as God's minister I am bound

to bring this message to you, my dread lord, for whom I pray the mercy and compassion of Heaven, and I warn and counsel you to think of this appeal. In the name of Gilles your brother, unworthily assassinated, Francis Duke of Bretagne, I summon you to appear before the tribunal of God. I summon you! I summon you! I summon you!'

"The monk drew his cowl over his head and retired unquestioned.

"The Duke was struck dumb with horror. That evening a violent fever attacked him, and at the expiration of forty days, Francis, a prey to remorse, found himself gradually sinking into hopeless decay. As he had no male child he bequeathed the ducal crown to his brother Peter, and recommended the duchess and his two daughters to his care. He took an affectionate leave of his wife, and having received the comforts of the Church in the presence of all his people, he entreated their pardon, saying, 'My friends, let the state in which you see me serve you as an example. I have been your prince, and now I am nothing.' And thus he expired."

The fine church of Mont St. Michel has been apparently marked out to be the prey of fire, for from the date of its construction in the eighth

century it has been a continual object of attack to the devouring element. Constantly burnt and immediately rebuilt, even very lately it has suffered from being struck with lightning, of which its blackened walls bear traces.

Numbers of illustrious pilgrims have from time to time visited the church of St. Michel. After the crusades these pilgrimages were made in troops, with their heralds, generals, and captains, &c.

From Germany, Italy, and France, these caravans were constantly arriving, and whole families, from the infant at its mother's breast to the grandsire tottering with age, came to offer their vows at the shrine of the saint; even as late as 1792 pilgrimages were not abandoned. Edward the Confessor of England made a voyage for this purpose; the son of William the Conqueror and his wife, Henry II. of England, many Dukes of Normandy, and most of the Kings of France, from Childebert upwards.

A curious meeting of reconciliation took place here between Henry II. and his wife Eleanor's first husband, Louis VII. of France, and much politeness and attention passed between them, however questionable their sincerity. At all events, Henry, who had become rich by the bad policy of the *pious* King, is said to have defrayed all the

expenses of his journey, and to have loaded him with presents. Perhaps a fellow feeling might have made them friends, as the beautiful and turbulent heiress probably contributed little to the happiness of either monarch.

About the year 1365, a lady, interesting on many accounts, both from her own merits and her connection with the greatest captain of the age, Madame Thiphaine Raguenel, daughter of the Vicomte de la Bellière and wife of Bertrand du Guesclin, "a lady well educated in philosophy and judicial astronomy," came to reside on the Mont during her husband's absence in the Spanish wars. He constructed a fine house for her in the upper part of the town, which was afterwards replaced by a convent. Charles VI. came here hoping to obtain the cure of his dreadful malady, but without avail. His son, the redeemer of France, also paid a visit to the church. The superstitious Louis XI. did not fail to pay his devoirs to the saint, and gave to the monastery six hundred crowns of gold. It was after this pilgrimage that he instituted at his Château of Amboise, on the 1st August 1469, the order of St. Michel.

The Mont is situated about three leagues from the hill of Avranches. Every day, morning and evening, it is surrounded by the sea, and

at certain periods of the moon, the waters rising rapidly over the wide sands, cover them in a few hours, and enter the beds of the rivers with impetuous force, forming a *barre*, whose foamy lines present a majestic spectacle as it advances with towering crest towards its destination. At these times the Mont appears to change its character; no longer a pyramid, it rises from the waves like a fine vessel of colossal size immovably at anchor on a vast roadstead, calm and tranquil. To reach this sea-wonder is sometimes a service of danger, and numerous accidents have been known to occur not only owing to the spongy, humid, and shifting nature of the sands, whose depths none have discovered, but to the sudden rising of the waters, which cannot be calculated upon exactly, as the wind has great influence on their arrival. The traveller overtaken by these terrific pursuers may endeavour, as they enter the rivers first, before the sands are overspread, by hurrying onwards to keep pace with them towards the shore, but unfortunately the hollows and creeks he has to pass become filled and bar his passage. Often from the height of the rock persons have been seen vainly struggling with the opposing waters, and have perished without the possibility of help being afforded. Another source of danger is the sud-

denness of the fogs, which sometimes on the brightest day will rise so dense, so thick, that shore, rivers, sky, and rocks are shrouded in an impenetrable veil, and the uncertain wanderer trusts to chance alone to direct him on his perilous way.

The inhabitants of Mont St. Michel are mostly fishers; they appear poor and scarcely clothed, but are said to be intelligent and industrious; the women and children are employed in searching in the sands for shell-fish, which not only serve them for habitual food, but are an article of considerable commerce, being much esteemed. Before the Revolution, this place was kept as a state prison, and many a *lettre de cachet* has condemned its unhappy victims to oblivion within these walls, the oppression and cruelty of which were expiated by an innocent family. Very few captives were found here when all the prisons were explored by the people, and those who were detained were placed there in mercy rather than in unkindness, that their concealed fate might shelter them from a public and capital punishment for crimes, the knowledge of which would have brought disgrace on their kindred.

The existence here of one of those hideous iron cages, supposed to have been invented by

Cardinal Balue for his infamous master, the use of which was tried on himself in the sequel, is well known from the circumstance of the Count d'Artois having humanely ordered its destruction. His commands were, however, neglected, and the Duke de Chartres, now King of the French, when visiting the monastery, accompanied by his celebrated governess Madame de Genlis, fearing that he should be no better obeyed, had it destroyed in his presence. Two persons are known to have suffered the torture of being confined in this cage, and to the eternal disgrace, amongst his numerous other disgraceful acts, of the Grand Monarque Louis XIV, one of the victims was condemned to such a fate by him. This was an unfortunate man named Dubourg, the editor of a Dutch paper, who had published some strictures on the conduct of the most refined and accomplished and glorious of tyrants! During the wretched *years* of his appalling confinement, he amused himself by carving figures with a nail on the bars of his cell: but the particulars of his sufferings are too hideous to dwell on! When at Chinon, at Loches or at Clisson, the traveller sees such frightful relics of the barbarity of the early ages, he considers them with less horror, allowing for the darkness of the time; but unmitigated disgust and hatred can be his only

feelings when he hears of atrocities of the same nature perpetrated in enlightened times and by a sovereign vaunted and held up as a nation's pride and admiration.

The contemptible Louis XV, brutal as he was vicious, imprisoned the last victim in this iron den, a wretched rhymer who had dared to print verses against that infamous woman, Madame de Pompadour. More fortunate than Dubourg, this man, named Desroches, was restored to liberty by the compassionate Louis XVI, who found no friendly hand to break his own fetters or save him from a cruel death!*

There were to be found also in this mysterious retreat several of those abysses of horror called *oubliettes* or *vade in pace*, which, however, have long since been filled up, or they would probably have been found useful in *our times*, which we must reluctantly call the period of the *great* French Revolution, when St. Michel served as a prison for three hundred priests, whose age and infirmities prevented their being transported! The last prisoner who found the mitigated punishment of imprisonment in these walls for attempted assassination, and who arrived here during our stay at Avranches, was the misguided

* See Notice Historique du Mont St. Michel, par M. Boudent Godelinière d'Avranches.

Barbés, whom French sentimentality attempted to exalt into a hero, chiefly perhaps on account of the devoted attachment of his sister, who condemned herself to reside on that barren rock in order to be near him. That she should say with the poet,

> "I know not, I ask not, if guilt 's in that heart,
> I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art!"

may be natural enough; but that any excuse should be attempted by persons of any party, at this period of the world, for meditated murder, appears too monstrous to be credited. Yet the race of enthusiasts in mad romance is numerous amongst *la jeune France*, and every school-boy lets his beard grow like an Algerine as he once guided his hair into a Roman form, and imagined himself not the less a Brutus,

> "Ay, or a Catiline,
> A noble Roman, though story wrong his fame."

CHAPTER V.

Sic et Non.—Abelard.—Lay of the Nightingale.—Sea-bathing in France.—Peasants.—Village Dandy.—The Shepherdess.—St. Aubert.—Val Hubert.—Cimetière.—Bonnes Sœurs.

CAREFULLY preserved in the public library of Avranches, among the most interesting and curious of that collection, is a work which, to the learned, is of great importance and value. It is no other than the celebrated and long-missing SIC ET NON of Abelard. This work, which made so great a sensation in his own time, and caused the author to be suspected of heresy, and considerably added to the persecutions which he experienced, is named by Guillaume de St. Thierry, when he denounced to St. Bernard, the great opponent of Abelard, the theology of that enlightened and daring philosopher, who saw too clearly for his age, and whose opinions were followed by Luther. The "Sic et Non" was pri-

vately circulated among the numerous followers of Abelard, but appeared afterwards to have been suppressed and lost. Nevertheless it was still in existence. For a series of years, not being discovered in any of the libraries where it was expected to have been preserved, the search was given up in despair. On occasion of the devastation of the library of the monastery of St. Michel many of the volumes had been conveyed to Avranches. A work by M. de St. Victor, a man of great attainment, as well as a most accomplished and elegant poet, and who is one of the many who render the society of Avranches so agreeable, gave a catalogue of the MSS., and, this being examined, the fact became established that the long-lost treasure was in their possession.

There are to be seen in this valuable collection several MSS. finely preserved with illuminated letters of great beauty, one of St. Augustin, another the cartulary of the abbey of Mont St. Michel, and one a poetical work transcribed by Frère Nicolas de Launey, prior of Mont Dol, with the date of 1400. It is a collection of poems on sacred subjects, miracles, &c: the author was the Prior Eustache, of the order of St. Bruno, in 1330. The following, called Le Chant du Roussigneul, appeared to me to possess

so much merit that a translation, as close as possible, may not be unacceptable to the reader.

THE LAY OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

" Sweet nightingale ! who com'st with gentle weather
To tell us Winter's reign is over now,
Bringing soft airs and happy hearts together,
Come at my call—my messenger be thou !

Go—where I have no power thy wing to follow,
To my best friend, and cheer him with thy lay;
All man's vain thoughts, ambitions false and hollow,
All the world's care charm with thy song away.

Salute my friend in tender moving numbers,
And speak of friendship in thy softest tone;
Say that my true affection never slumbers,
In every place my thoughts are his alone.

* * * * * *

And thou, dear friend, receive this bird of greeting,
And let the symbol to thy heart be dear,
The Spirit, ever blest, shall hail this meeting,
And holy harmony instruct thine ear.

'Tis said this bird, when life's last knell is ringing,
Alights on some high bough, where thorns are rife,
There tunes his throat, there pours his soul in singing,
And in faint murmurs bids adieu to life.

His farewell song begins at early morning,
To praise his Maker all his skill he tries,
His hymn, with added grace, each hour adorning,
Nor pausing in his heavenly melodies.

This gentle minstrel, who was faithful ever,
Long as his strength endures will warble still,
Now trembles, as he chaunts, with bold endeavour,
A louder carol, or a softer thrill.

His notes grow wilder as the day advances,
He feels his wasting strength is ebbing fast,
He casts to list'ning heaven his eager glances,
Each rising sound still sweeter than the last.

At noon, high tones he pours of praise and gladness,
Though life's pale star above him dimly shines,
Then sinks by slow degrees in whisp'ring sadness,
As shadows lengthen, and as day declines.

His tongue no longer tells his fond emotion,
His voice grows hoarse, night comes with chilling breath,
One long, low plaint of sorrow and devotion,
And prone he falls, for ever mute in death!"

The town of Avranches is surrounded with neat boulevards. The trees are yet young, but in a few years these walks will be very agreeable. The houses built along them are extremely pleasant: several have charming gardens and fine views. No industry seems wanting to complete the convenience and comfort of the place, and its general cleanliness cannot fail to please the English residents, who are numerous. In winter much gaiety is going on; balls are of frequent occurrence, and society is exceedingly brilliant and cheerful; in the height of summer the custom is to go to Granville for sea-bathing,

and the younger part of the community look forward with pleasure to the delights of living in the sea and dancing in the evening in the temporary ball-rooms erected for the amusement of visiters; though how anything agreeable can be got up at the dirtiest, most squalid-looking, wretched fishing town I ever beheld, appears to me inexplicable. A pretty young *English* girl, however, who was born and had only lived at Avranches, described the luxuries and charms of a month's bathing at Granville, in terms which might have suited Brighton or Cheltenham. "In fact," said she, "I assure you, what with the dancing in rounds for hours in the sea, with all one's friends, and meeting them again at night, at the balls, it is a perfect Paradise!" I began to think I must have been quite mistaken in Granville, or had missed seeing the beautiful spots she so eloquently described, but when she named the very hotel where we endured the torture of a dinner and a night, as the place of her abode, when she for a brief season, no longer, "like ocean's scaly brood, might cleave with rapid fin the wave," I had no difficulty in appreciating all the *other* enchantments of her Elysium.

Genest, a village on the sands towards Mont St. Michel, is also a place of resort during the

summer, but I should be inclined to think it a foretaste of the deserts of Arabia, rather than a spot in which to breathe freer sea air than from the fine heights of Avranches. The baths to be found here, however, are principally of sand, considered good for some chronic complaints. To reach the wave a quarter of a mile's wading amongst low rocks is necessary, and as there are no machines, I cannot imagine it quite suited to English ideas; but this was, nevertheless, described to me as a great treat by a French lady who had tried it. Remembering the misfortunes I had experienced in my ramble to the grêve of Pont Gilbert, attracted by its apparent beauty, I could not listen, without a shudder, to the catalogue of delights to be discovered on the burning sands of Genest. Bathing abroad is a very different operation to the mode as practised in England. At Havre I was amused observing the process. You enter a canvass box and undress, putting on, as a bathing costume, a blouse pantaloons, and oil-skin cap, and being thus equipped, as if for exhibition on a tight rope, with the addition of a pair of sabots to preserve the feet, you follow the path, indicated by planks, along the shingles for some hundred yards, in the face of all the world, followed by a man, also in a bathing dress. Arrived at the edge

of the water you present your hand to your companion, and enter the wide expanse together. Thus, hand-in-hand, like lovers resolved to dare fate in each other's company, the pair commence a promenade, getting deeper and deeper amongst the waves, till they reach the hips. This lasts as long as you please; half-an-hour, or for hours, as it may happen, and according to the *society* which may arrive — as a French person must have society everywhere — and then you return to your canvass box in your wet garments. "But," I remonstrated to the woman who kept the rooms, "all the world can see you." "*Mais certainement! qu'est ce que cela fait?*" was all the answer.

The costume of Avranches and the villages round, is very pretty and picturesque, though the high caps are degenerating as to material, and approaching nearer to the elegance of less primitive regions; the gold and silver embroidery, and the rich lace which formerly made these head-dresses heir-looms in a family, have almost all disappeared, and cheap net and edging have supplied their place. The colours of the petticoats, aprons, and handkerchiefs of the women, are rich and beautifully mixed; the invariable blue lining of the fly-cap has a becoming effect, and the addition to the whole costume of a scar-

let umbrella, completes the brilliancy of the *tout ensemble.* Nothing can be prettier than to observe, as we frequently did, from the windows of our rurally-situated house on the Route de Mortain, the crowds of well-dressed peasants passing on errands of amusement up and down the road on a Sunday or fête day. The universal neatness and smartness of both men and women, is very striking; the air of respectability and contented cheerfulness very pleasing.

Next to the house we inhabited, and close to its garden-wall, was a neighbourhood of cottages unlike most of those to be seen at Avranches, but common enough in the outskirts of all other French towns; that is to say, dark, dim, slovenly-looking hovels, the inhabitants of which usually sit at their doors, spinning or knitting, regardless of all within. One of these was a butcher's shop, and in spite of the little space or light afforded by the chambers, the owners contrived to arrange their domicile so as to combine the ornamental with the useful. Their principal room, "which served them for parlour, for kitchen, and hall," was also used as a *boutique* and sleeping apartment. A handsome bed with festooned curtains and gilt ornaments, occupied the further end, and near the window hung a range of dead sheep, displayed

according to the received rules of butchers' art. Another cottage was the abode of a young shoemaker, whose foppery and conceit were a frequent source of amusement to us. He evidently considered himself the Adonis of the *quartier*, and might, probably, not be solitary in his opinion. One morning, on the occasion of a fête, his vagaries were quite irresistible. There had been a flood of rain during the night, and all the ground before his dwelling was soaked; nevertheless, there stood our neighbour in a costume so resplendent, that I scarcely recognized him. His shirt was snow-white, his trousers the same, his jacket, of the *juste milieu* length, of a rich blue, evidently new from the tailor's; his cravat was silk — I have no doubt the first he had ever called his own, for it was the very crown of his glory that day — it was perfect! variegated from blue to grey, from grey to purple, in the most delicate shades — no description can do it justice. Jean was calling vehemently to some one within the house; the noise he made seemed an involuntary ebullition of dignity, or it might be intended to attract the attention of those around. He continued to look anxiously up and down the road, and at the lowering sky; he untwined his neckcloth, gazed at it with satisfaction, waved it in

his hand, hummed a tune, and re-entered his domicile; this was early in the day, but every half-hour he reappeared on the *parvis* of his habitation, capering and singing, and endeavouring to draw the attention of the passers-by to his appearance. Between every shower, like, and with, a gleam of sunshine, he started out and continued his exhibition. At length the weather cleared, and his spirits seemed to rise accordingly; "*Ah!*" he exclaimed "*voilà le beau tems, je m'en vais mettre ma cravate! maman donnez-moi donc ma cravate!*" and he sprung over his paternal gutter in ecstacies. Presently appeared the *maman*, a *bonne grosse femme*, with the pocket of her red apron stuffed with something good, as Jean ascertained by thrusting his hands in, in spite of her laughing remonstrance, and there, in the face of all his neighbours, did she give the finishing tie to the renowned cravat. A little light girl of fifteen next came out: her high net fly-cap sticking out like butterflies' wings on each side, a gold pin adjusting the ribbon which bound it, a carnation-coloured apron, dark blue petticoat, and green sleeves, blue stockings, little red socks, and black sabots, altogether as *gentil* a little figure as ever leaped over a *ruisseau*. Still all did not seem ready — still the party looked wistfully along the

road, when suddenly the repeated exclamation of *la voilà!* introduced to our observation a beautiful young shepherdess approaching; really beautiful, and truly a shepherdess. Her towering cap, with its gossamer sails, was confined by a silver ribbon; her petticoat was of a rich coffee brown, her apron a dahlia crimson, her handkerchief golden yellow, her sleeves grass green, her collar snow white, delicately plaited and pinned down behind so as to display her white throat, bound by a little black cord from which depended her *Saint Esprit* and cross. She held in her hand a long whip doubled, and before her ran briskly, occasionally climbing the banks like goats, three long-tailed lambs. These she drove before her, till from a neighbouring lane she was met by two men, one who, his *sombrero* shading his dark eyes and lively young countenance, looked almost Spanish, and the other a hale old man, each in gala dress. These were evidently her brother and father. The latter took possession of the little flock; and now peals of laughter and shouts of greeting explained the proceedings of a whole day, and the happy party, each selecting a companion, sallied out to enjoy the fête, while the old shepherd and a steady-looking friend leisurely pursued their route with their fleecy care at their side.

One of the most agreeable promenades in Avranches is the *Jardin des Plantes*; the perfume of its flowers, the neatness of its walks, the fine shade of its lofty trees, make it a delightful resource at all times of the day. If the sun is too powerful to allow of remaining among the plants, you have a retreat under the deep avenues and grove planted on a terrace beneath; and beyond that again a fine piece of down opens upon the wide country, and St. Michel and the sea are before you; while, as you lounge round the walls partly overgrown in a picturesque manner with ivy, the fragrance of an apple orchard below is wafted on the refreshing breeze; fields, downs, and gardens slope away to the distant shore, and the constant variety produced by the capricious changes of the atmosphere, here peculiarly remarkable, renders the scene interesting and inviting in the extreme.

Half concealed by the high trees, and forming one side of the Jardin des Plantes, is the Convent of the Ursulines, an antique, sombre-looking building, with a number of shelving roofs irregularly grouped together, and rendered picturesque by a luxuriant grape-vine which runs all over the walls and windows. There is nothing interesting in the church attached to the con-

vent, nor is there much attraction in any of the churches of Avranches, although one of them possesses a valuable relic in the identical skull of St. Aubert, which still exhibits the mark of the Archangel's finger.

St. Aubert was bishop of Avranches in the year 709, and was commanded in a vision by St. Michel to erect a church and monastery on the mount, which, after the pagan worship had disappeared, had become the abode of a community of holy hermits under the superintendance of St. Pair, a former bishop, and whose cells were of the rudest nature. Conceiving it a work almost impracticable to build on the summit of a pointed and almost inaccessible rock, St. Aubert at first paid little attention to the orders he received so peremptorily, but, as his rest was continually broken by the apparition of the armed angel; he began to consider the subject, and was at length determined by no less an occurrence than the saint impressing on his skull a mark with his finger, which burnt a hole into the bone. This intimation, though somewhat singular, considering that it came from the warlike saint and *not* from the demon with whom he is always contending, produced the desired effect. St. Aubert set about the work in earnest, and a circular church, surrounded by cells, soon

crowned the then forest-surrounded rock. St. Michel, probably content that he had been obeyed, now gave every assistance in his power, and appearing again to the bishop, ordered him to send to Mont Gargan,* on the borders of the Adriatic, for a block of marble on which the holy visitant himself had rested when he descended in that part of the country. St. Aubert, now full of zeal in the cause, lost no time in despatching three clerks of his church of Avranches, who were more than a year performing their pilgrimage. On their return their astonishment was extreme to find that the forest they had left round Mont Jovis† (so was St. Michel then called) had disappeared, and a waste of waters had usurped its place! However, the resolution of St. Aubert, assisted by the watchful

* Or St. Angelo.

† It is related by P. Dumoustier, author of *Neustria Pia*, with admirable credulity, that the first hermits who established themselves on Mont Jovis, were supplied with the means of subsistence by a pious curate of Beauvois. One unlucky day the ass accustomed to carry the provisions destined to this holy purpose, was attacked on his way and devoured by a wolf; one would naturally suppose that this event occasioned considerable inconvenience to the recluses, but it was otherwise ordered; the impious wolf, as a punishment for his wickedness, was compelled to take the ass's place, and continued to trot regularly backwards and forwards on the necessary errands as long as he was required!

angel, overcame all difficulties, and the celebrated monastery was begun.

The whole of this legend, with many other particulars, is recorded and represented in a fine illuminated MS. possessed by the public library of Avranches.

Besides the Jardin des Plantes, another inviting promenade is in the Place de l'Eveché, where rows of fine trees render the walks cool and pleasant. In the centre of this handsome square is a good statue of General Valhubert, a native of Avranches. Napoleon ordered this tribute to be paid to the brave man who had distinguished himself under his command on so many occasions. His death took place at Austerlitz. Napoleon had given orders that the wounded should lie where they fell, as it would have thinned his ranks too much to spare men to remove them. Valhubert's troop, when they saw him fall, advanced to bear him away, but the dying General, faithful to his orders, would not permit a violation of duty, and expired on the spot. Napoleon was much affected on hearing what had taken place. The features of this distinguished officer bear a strong resemblance to those of his great master, but the statue is much too large for its position, a defect observable very frequently in the works of French sculptors: it is said that

the original intention was to place it on a high pedestal in the centre of the Place Huet, which may account for its gigantic proportions.

The cemetery of Avranches is at some distance on the descent of the hill, at an angle of the road. It is beautifully situated, in a fine airy open space, and is laid out with great attention to neatness and propriety. The Protestant part is divided from the rest, and distinguished by the absence of crosses over the graves; all are adorned with flowers and shrubs, and the little gardens are well kept. The sexton, a half-witted creature, was busy in his calling when we visited it, and added another proof to the knowledge of human nature displayed by Shakspeare in all he touches. This man was a counterpart of Hamlet's friend; he was, however, a French likeness, being more courteous than his prototype. He assured me that it was very "snug lying" here, and boasted of the care he took of the gardens and plants, that is, if he was desired to do so, as otherwise he could not waste his time on them. He was anxious to obtain from me news of a certain English captain who had ordered him to keep up a little Protestant grave, but who, not having appeared for some time, he feared was likely to desert the cause and cheat him of his dues. I remarked that there were very

few in this division of the cemetery; he appeared piqued at this observation, and said, as he patted up a mound on which he was leaning, "*Ah, par example! mais ça commence, dans quelque mois nous verrons, il sera beau assez!*"

He was much elated in relating the particulars of a fine *cortége* which had accompanied to the grave, the day before, a defunct dignitary of the town. He dwelt on the trappings and ornaments, and regretted, most feelingly, that I had not come to witness the spectacle which he declared to be *beau à voir et bien gai.* On taking leave of him, I could not avoid starting when he waved his hand significantly, and exclaimed, *au revoir.* I confess I could not cordially reciprocate his wish considering his desire to see his 'garden grow.'

We were both amused and annoyed at a custom which prevails, I believe, everywhere in Catholic countries, but particular at Avranches, where the people are very devout. It is at certain periods of the year the sudden announcement from your servant maids that they are *en retraite* for a week; i. e. if they belong to a society called Les Bonnes Sœurs. These Sœurs are a species of amateur sisters of charity, or nuns: when their youth begins to wane many women attach themselves to this community,

thereby avoiding the reproach of *single blessedness*, and gaining a reputation for piety at little expense. They enter service, and go through all worldly occupations as usual, but have made a vow of devotion to the Church, and of giving up all their spare time to its duties. Occasionally they are called upon, and their mistresses must do without them, for as long a period as they are required to attend to their adopted vocations. Their time is then spent in visiting the sick, in begging charity, and in prayers. As their conduct is generally good, persons do not object to receive them as servants, but such proceedings are anything but convenient, particularly to English families, who are not quite aware when these sudden calls on them may take place. It is not unusual to be accosted in the street, and requested to contribute to some charitable undertaking by one of these Bonnes Sœurs, who bustle about with an air of great importance during their temporary power, and, it must be confessed, have, at all times, an air of patronage and superior sanctity which, for my own part, did not give them much favour in my eyes. It appears to me to be a species of inquisition which families may as well avoid. Many persons of rank belong to this order, and frequently will call in their carriages and send

up their names, when they announce their business to be begging *pour l'amour de Dieu.* This is a very usual custom in Paris, and would be more honoured in the breach than the observance! However, they obtain their end *malgré vous.*

CHAPTER VI.

St. Loup.—St. Quentin.—Curiosity.—Mineral Waters.—Walks.—Sand Carts.—La Luzerne.—Abbaye.

LTHOUGH Avranches itself is destitute of antiquities, there is enough to be found in its vicinity to interest the most zealous antiquary, and so beautiful and varied are the walks and drives round, that every day some new object of attraction may be sought, and all trouble repaid by the pleasure of seeking it. One of the prettiest walks is to the secluded village of St. Loup, really clean and neat, and unlike most of those to be met with in France. It is very small, consisting only of a few houses surrounding a raised churchyard; the gardens are nicely kept, and the people civil, without being inquisitive or intrusive. Here there is no noise, no confusion, all is solitary, quiet, and uninterrupted. A magnificent fir-tree flourishes near the steps of what was once a carved stone cross,

and an antique ivied gateway, on the opposite side of the road, exhibits the last remains of a religious house, which, doubtless, once concealed itself in so appropriate a spot. The architecture of the church is early Norman: one of the doors is slightly ornamented with chevron work, the other is plain, but the circular arches of both are supported by pillars, whose capitals are sculptured heads: the same ornament is repeated along the corbel table, under the cornice of the exterior. These heads are all tolerably clear, and some of them extremely sharp; the

windows are of the early pointed or transition style. On the whole this pretty church is a valuable specimen, and it is to be regretted that Mr. Gally Knight, who visited every nook and corner that he could find during his delightful tour, should have missed seeing St. Loup, when he passed by Avranches. He would almost as much deplore not having sought out another church, at a village rather farther off, called St. Quentin, the walks to which are equally pleasant, whether it is approached by the intricate lanes, which may be followed for miles, and lead to a variety of secluded hamlets, or by the more open high road, which conducts to the magnificent Bois de Quenouailles. The village of St. Quentin itself is, however, so slovenly and dirty, that, but for the distant attraction of the fine square Norman tower, which lures the amateur to mount its tedious hill, few would venture to wade through the litter of the only street, at the end of which, and surrounded by squalid cottages, stands this interesting structure. Even in the midst of sights and smells revolting, the beauty of the Norman girls shone out, and we observed one dressing at a hovel window to accompany her impatient and handsome swain below, whose clear skin and bright eyes seemed singularly out of place in such a

den. The church was locked up, and we grieved to hear the reason. Several robberies having taken place, the curé was obliged to take this précaution. We regretted his absence, for we had been told that he was a zealous antiquary of eighty, very intelligent, and particularly attached to the English, having shared their hospitality during a long emigration. The antique porch is supported by graduated buttresses, and has a parapet running along the top of the wall: the exterior door, early pointed, is plainer than the interior, which is circular and ornamented, though not elaborately, and the pillars and groinings of the roof of the porch are very delicate. The same corbel table, with similar heads to that of St. Loup, decorates the cornice.

Nothing can be finer than the view from the hill of Quenouailles, near which once stood a fine château, destroyed in the revolution. Fatigued with our extended, though interesting walk, we sat for some time admiring its variety and richness; and here we were accosted by a peasant woman, whose route lay our way, and who furnished us with one proof, out of many, that inquisitiveness and a certain established familiarity is quite as peculiar to the French as to the Americans. Having satisfied, in the way that most suited us, her numerous questions as

to our pursuits, mode of living, future and present intentions, &c, she left us, with the patronage of her good wishes, and continued her journey. Although there is nothing offensive in this habit of accosting every one, which is so usual in France, it is sometimes troublesome, and certainly evinces more sociability than modesty on the part of the natives, to whom it never seems to occur that their conversation can be ill-timed. At Avranches, and in its neighbourhood, where the utmost civility and *bonhommie* exist, the sojourner can well support this species of inquisition, but, out of Normandy, and in less primitive regions, it is sometimes extremely annoying, and gives rise to speculations as to the right, generally accorded to the French, of being the politest of nations.

Every day new rambles may be made, and all charming. A very favourite one is the Bois de Naufray, which extends along a broad terrace half-way up the mountain, forming a belt, from whose openings, at intervals, the two mounts, the sea, and the coast of Brittany, come out in fine relief against the clear, sunny sky. This wooded walk is pleasingly interrupted with meadows and heathy downs; and again, on pursuing the devious way, you find yourself once more sheltered amongst the young trees: occasionally a thatch-

ed cottage peeps out below or above, or the newly-built house of some English resident, situated always in the very best position. There are not, however, so many of our countrymen here now as formerly, several, who long resided at Avranches, having sought "fresh fields and pastures new" farther off in Brittany, where it is both cheaper, and where there may be greater facilities for sporting. One gentleman, who had taken and greatly improved a house in a beautiful part of this road, where he had collected round him a perfect *jardin des plantes*, owing to some dispute about a right of fishing, became disgusted and abandoned all, deserting to the opposite shore, and leaving his fine place desolate.

There are mineral waters, in a valley called La Bouillant, which used to be more frequented than they now are, few but the peasants round patronizing the well at present. The spring is in a romantic, quiet spot, near a mill-stream, which falls into cascades at distances, and whose murmurs fill the valley with a pleasing sadness. Beautiful emerald meadows, little *bosquets*, thymy hills, and deep, sandy, and rocky lanes lead to the magnificent wood of Arpilly, at some distance; before you arrive at which, your way lies past a romantic village church, at one side of

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which stands one of the prettiest cottages and gardens imaginable, the abode of the curé. Along the lane, in this vicinity, are several others, veritable *cottages ornées*, arranged by English taste, though some are now inhabited by French families. I cannot help dwelling on this pretty scene, because, having once taken leave of it, no more neatness or care of this kind will greet the traveller throughout France, for with Normandy ends all similarity to English habits!

From the wood of Arpilly a series of views of the grandest description enchants the eye, never weary of gazing over the expanse of rich and cultivated country spread out in a panorama on every side. It is easy to lose your way, and wander for hours quite happy in your mistake, amongst the feathery foliage, and under the deep shades, now in a dark valley, now mounting up a steep ascent supported only by catching at the broom and short underwood, and suddenly finding yourself near the clouds, with a prospect awaiting you such as would repay any toil, far less agreeable than that you have gone through. Bewildered by the succession of beauties, you have only to choose one spot and there remain for hours to recover your fatigue, forgetting there are towns or houses or dinner bells in the world.

Thrice happy he who by some shady grove
Far from the clamorous world doth live his own,
Tho' solitary, who is not alone.

* * * * * *

Woods, harmless shades have only true delights!

DRUMMOND.

Many a day of summer this was our occupation, and scarcely a bosky dell or wooded glen was a stranger to our curiosity. Since then, scenes equally lovely, and more interesting from association, have charmed us; but the natural and rural beauties of the neighbourhood of Avranches, will always be remembered with extreme pleasure.

There are some *short* periods of time and some certain places in which all is sunshine and enjoyment; and with us so rare an occurrence took place in this enchanted ground. Place, people, weather, all were under the same influence, and it seemed as if no cloud could come across that sky. Happy delusion! and fortunately not dissipated, so that its recollection has no alloy and can awaken only pleasurable thoughts.

If, however, the sojourner in the Avranchin is afraid of leading too tranquil a life, let him hire a cabriolet and set out on an exploring expedition, following the steps of Mr. Gally Knight (whose book, translated by M. de Cau-

mont, is the treasure of these regions, where antiquarianism flourishes), to the remains of the ancient abbey of La Luzerne. The village of La Luzerne is about four leagues from Avranches; the road lies through the dirty, sandy, hideous village of Pont Gilbert on the *grêve* at the mouth of the river Sellune, where we were once tempted to walk, attracted from the mountain above, by what seemed green meadows on the banks, but which turned out to be marshes, and the pretty white walks between, long lines of sand heaps, placed there ready to load the innumerable carts which from this to Pontorson, on the confines of Brittany, pursue their way in uninterrupted succession, bearing this precious manure to the neighbouring districts. This treasure, for such it is, is inexhaustible, and knowing its value to agriculture, one ought to forgive the annoyance these vehicles occasion to wanderers in search of the picturesque. These carts are drawn chiefly by bullocks, with horses assisting, and their conductors are principally Bretons, who in the estimation of the Normans are little superior in intellect or manners to their cattle. Some taste is, however, displayed by them in the arrangement of their burthens, for it is usual to see a garland or bouquet of choice flowers stuck into every mound of compact sand, which

has a somewhat ludicrous effect from the extreme contrast, similar to that produced by observing the usual ornament of a butcher's shop, a vase of gold fish and a china bowl of flowers, or the pretty golden shrub called by the Tourangians *orangier des cordonniers*, from its being constantly placed on the shoemaker's board.

Once escaped from these tormentors, the road becomes agreeable and improves as you arrive at Sartilly; the church of which is an early Norman structure, pretty, and bearing a remarkable similarity to the charming churchyard of Groombridge in Kent, both as to situation and from having a very aged and majestic yew-tree its immediate companion.

I find throughout my wanderings that I have fallen into a habit of comparing all the rural scenery and picturesque *accidents* I meet with to something similar which had before charmed me in the neighbourhood of Tunbridge Wells, certainly one of the most beautiful and romantic parts of the rural and pretty county of Kent, and unequalled for *home* beauty. Perhaps, however, all scenes gain by possessing the power of calling back the memory of favourite spots; and perhaps also the resemblance lies rather in a fanciful idea than in a real existence, and others may not be so impressed; just as like-

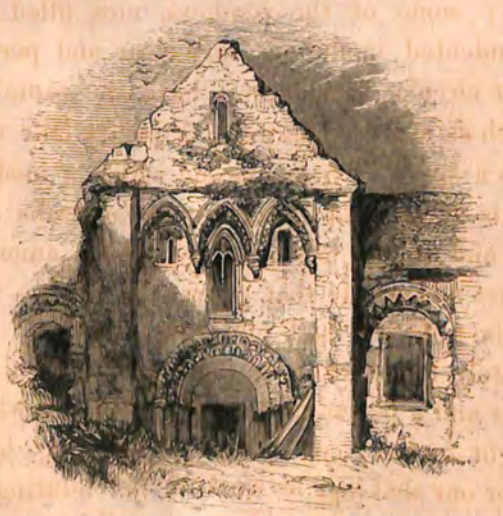
nesses of feature or expression are often unrecognized by one, though to another they may be strongly attractive.

As our guide, who must have been a Gascon to judge by his boasting, turned out, like all boasters, to have deceived us, and was profoundly ignorant of the road to the abbey, we found ourselves, after a drive through almost impracticable lanes, in the village of La Luzerne, where we had no business to be, and finding it was necessary to rest the jaded horses, we accepted the offered civility of a cottager, and explored the neighbourhood. Hearing of a château, and being yet novices in the meaning attached to the term, thinking of course only of ruined castles of old renown, we were much disappointed to find, after mounting a steep lane, a remarkably ugly modern house belonging to the Comte de Canisy, and were little less edified by being shown a telegraph, the pride of the district. One cottage, which, with two others, seemed to form the whole of the bourg, was very clean; its inmate, an old woman, was busy winding wool from a wheel, and complained of gaining a very hard livelihood by this monotonous occupation. She had lately lost an aged husband, and seemed lonely and sad, but she spoke with animation of the expected return to her native village of a young girl who

had long been settled in London in some business, and who every three years came back to see her parents, whom she supported handsomely by her earnings. Her errand this time was to marry her betrothed, a young man who had also succeeded in life, and both were to meet at this secluded spot, and in the presence of their friends and neighbours to be united. It was such a pleasing picture of primitive and simple goodness that we felt much interested in its details, and could not but rejoice that true love and filial goodness could exist in spite of great cities and refinement, and also that such virtue found its reward.

Through a beautiful wood, with banks covered with heath-bells and yellow and purple flowers in exquisite profusion, we continued our way; road it could not be called, for it was a mere hollow scooped apparently by the torrents which in winter probably rush along this rocky bed, and tracked by waggon wheels. Finding it impossible to remain in the carriage, we dismounted and enjoyed the walk for some miles further, when, directed by a little boy whom we had pressed into the service at the village, at length we reached the far-famed abbey. A fine square tower still remains, a beautiful object amongst the surrounding wood; the rest is desecrated,

converted into barns, work-shops, and wood-houses belonging to the manufacturer on whose land the ruins stand! The chapel is the most perfect, and is a simple and grand specimen of early Norman building; ruined walls and courts appear on all sides encumbered with farming necessaries, hay, straw, and piles of wood, but consequently clean; and the ground being strewed with sawdust prevents the humidity usually attendant on the exploring of vaults and fallen roofs: the massy pillars no longer support the arches which proudly rested on them in the days of grandeur when this abbey was the boast of the country; all the delicate tracery is mutilated, the



slender shafts broken suddenly off, and a pile of confused ruin, every day becoming larger and higher, strews the halls and chambers. It is the intention of the present proprietor to remove it all by degrees, as it interferes with his commercial pursuits, and the space it occupies can be more advantageously employed. The sketches we took, therefore, will probably be the last of this fine ruin, which stands in a spot fitted for pious meditation, removed from the busy crowd and shut in alone with nature in her simplest and most quiet mood. The principal entrance is still entire, the pillars sharp, supporting the fine circular arches of the door, ornamented with zigzags; some of the windows, now filled up, have indented mouldings very clear and perfect to their circular arch, others have the same but the arch is acutely pointed. A pretty lake now fills up a space in front, beside which a modern house is built, and the remnants of walls and arches and tombs are scattered about amongst the grass and weeds that grow over them. We left this romantic and picturesque retreat, and fortunately found our way through the wood by a nearer and a better road, namely, that by which we ought to have come at first; not sorry, however, for our shaking, as we had, by enduring it, approached the abbey at the most striking point.

One of the principal attractions to us in this part of Lower Normandy was the idea of seeing the Bocage country, and the towns of Mortain and Vire, the first celebrated for its collegiate church, a treasure to antiquaries, and the latter famous, besides its once fine castle, as being the birthplace of the author of those Vaux de vire, or Vaudevilles, so characteristic of France itself; in their origin songs in praise of wine, but since extending to the length of dramas.

The road to Mortain is pretty, during the whole route: at Juvigny it becomes very fine, and the scenery improves in breadth and beauty as you approach the entrance of the town once so important in history, and now a wretched neglected place. Huge piles of grey rock on one side of the road look frowning down like giants guarding the path; far off appear through the trees the towers of the Abbaye Blanche in its sequestered nook; the soil is deep red, the cornfields cease and all the distance is uninterrupted bocage.

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CHAPTER VII.

The Bocage.*—Mortain.—Collegiate Church.—The young Guide.—The Abbaye Blanche.—Waterfalls.

Chascun oisel en son latin
Chantoit parmi le vert bocage.

ADAM RAYMONT

OWEVER romantic and beautiful the country might be on our approach to Mortain we could not but feel a chill to our enthusiasm when the vehicle in which we travelled stopped at the only inn in the place. At first we felt disposed to demur, but on observing that immediately opposite was the principal door and façade

* The Bocage of Normandy must not be confounded with the sombre district generally recognized by that name in La Vendée. It is usual in France to distinguish a wooded country by the term *pays du bocage*. This particular part is thus described by geographers:—"Le Bocage; petit pays de France en Basse Normandie vers les sources des rivières

of the collegiate church, we called to mind that our object in coming was to visit this monument, and that it was our duty to support all trials in such a cause. Arming ourselves, then, with resolution, we entered the black den of a kitchen, which was the only way by which the chamber assigned to us could be gained. We mounted a "narrow stair," and threaded the mazes of a corridor, shuddering at every step. Through the darkness we observed, *entassé*, beneath the stairs, a bed in which at night something human slept, and where a huge black dog indulged by day: at last we reached our room and found ourselves in one of good size with two windows, one exactly opposite the church: the floor was boarded, a great misfortune in France, as to scour is a process unknown in these regions, and the consequence of their being left uncleaned *for ever* may be imagined, not described! The cups for our coffee were rinced and the water thrown on the floor as if it had been bricked, and as all the other domestic arrangements are carried

d'Elle, Drôme, Aure, Odon, Orne, Vire et Noireau. La première le borne au levant et la sépare de le campagne de Caen, la seconde le borne au couchant et le sépare de Coutentin," &c. Vire is the capital town of the Bocage, its bourgs are Torigni, Evreci, Clecy, Condé, Villers, Aunay, Vassi. Tinchebray, most of them mentioned as the scene of contention during the numerous Norman and English wars.

on with equal delicacy, the state of the apartment was anything but inviting. The beds, however, presented a singular contrast, though one not unusual in France, of neatness and even elegance; the crimson and white draperies tastefully hung, and the coverlids of quilted satin! moreover, as is invariably the case in the worst inns, the beds were very good.

Our female attendant, the very soul of civility and goodnature, did all she could to satisfy us, even to producing her own goods for our accommodation; for, finding knives had been forgotten in the service, she offered us a clasp knife from her apron pocket with all the *bonhommie* imaginable! To do justice to the establishment, the linen was snow-white, spun and woven at Mortain, and bleached at Avranches; and all the viands were excellent.

The bell of the collegiate church awoke us early next day, and we crossed the road to examine it. The interior has nothing to offer of the slightest interest, being entirely modern and in the worst taste. A party of priests, one of whom had been our travelling companion, assured me that there were some very fine pictures, which I was weak enough to credit and to look for. They had, I found, been just painted and sent from Paris. I was led to look at one from its

subject, St. Guillaume, imagining it had reference to the Armed Hermit of Aquitaine, father of the fierce and fair Elinor; but found it was another saint *of this neighbourhood*, whose miracles were represented in and about, up and down the picture with a disregard of perspective worthy of primitive art, though somewhat less interesting!

The detestably bad pictures which disfigure the chapels in every part of France, really astonish the traveller, who cannot form an idea of the state of degradation into which this style of ornament is fallen; indeed, the whole decorations of the altars, the bits of cut paper and tinsel, and faded artificial flowers disgust one at every turn. At the pretty church alone of St. Loup near Avranches, we saw with pleasure a charming offering peculiar apparently to that simple neighbourhood, viz. a distaff and hanks of thread, laid on the altar of the Virgin by the young girls of the village on occasion of their marriage.

There are in the collegiate church the remains of some curiously carved seats or misereres round the choir, which is the only antique remain. A painful representation of the crucifixion, of enormous size, the wooden figure gaudily painted, is the admiration of the townspeople, and quite

sufficient to drive an antiquarian out of the sanctuary.

There is little remaining of the original structure of this once-celebrated church, except two doorways and part of the square tower. One of the portals is very beautiful, and in good preservation. It has a wide circular arch, with sculptured decorations of considerable elegance, the chevron and quatrefoil ornaments alternately. The principal entrance door has the early pointed arch, and is extremely simple. The windows, now built up, are of the lancet form; but there is no beauty whatever to attract, as the roof and great part of the walls are covered in, with a view rather to convenience than the semblance of following the original architecture. Mortain, indeed, appears singularly deficient in veneration for its monuments.

We had heard of the fine ruins of the castle of Mortain, perched, like the eyry of an eagle, on the height of the town, and we spent some time in vain in searching for it; but having afterwards procured a guide, we discovered the site alone, for the Vandals are at this moment destroying the last morsel of the fine walls, in order to employ the stone and mortar in building up a hideous prefecture on the spot where the picturesque ruin lately stood! Our guide bitterly

lamented this want of taste and probable want of policy in the authorities, for he justly remarked that a stop was now put to the frequent visits of strangers, who used to come to Mortain to sketch and admire the ruins. All the enthusiasm, so much wanting in these officials, seemed centred in our guide; and this was the more surprising, as he was a boy under fifteen, who followed the occupation of cicerone to all visitors, and appeared to have chosen it *con amore*.

It was really quite delightful to be accompanied by so intelligent, graceful, and poetical a creature as our guide; entering into all the beauties of the scenes to which he conducted us with the spirit of an antiquarian and artist. I am quite convinced, if fortune favours him, that some years hence will see our gentlemanlike and well-bred page in a more distinguished position, probably studying at Paris in the Musée Charles X, or known as the author of some of the best works of imagination of the day. *Our* Edwin, most assuredly, "was no vulgar boy." Under his auspices we walked, in the soft, grey morning, along a beautiful path, presenting every now and then varied and interesting snatches of landscape, till we reached the quiet and secluded spot, where, embosomed in a woody valley, extend the ruins of the Abbaye Blanche, now used

partly as a college, and also as a manufactory. No "learned runagates," however, disturbed the stillness by their sports or the murmurs of their study, for it was fortunately vacation; and we wandered through the courts, the beautiful cloisters, and into the chapel, the only entire part, uninterrupted.

The early Norman style here prevails, as at Mortain; the arches are very lofty and fine, and there is a good deal of delicate carving on the wainscot partitions and the misereres. Nothing can be more delightful than the solitude of this situation; and, though a considerable manufactory exists, it has not destroyed the *tout-ensemble* so much as at La Luzerne.

We were sorry to abandon the valley, but continued our way, through neat lanes, to the pretty village of Neufberg, where the church of St. Fiacre attracted us by its fine Norman portal, equal to and contemporary with those of the Abbey.

While we were pausing to admire the really clean appearance of this village, a rush was made from several cottages, and great consternation and anxiety appeared to prevail. One peasant stood clasping her hands, and exclaiming, in a tone of sorrow, "*Est-il possible!*" and we found that a neighbour, an aged woman, was at the point of death.

It was evident that some one was looked for, whom we supposed was the doctor; but the cry of "He is coming at last!" was followed by the appearance, at the end of the lane, of a priest, hurrying along in sabots, without a hat. As he approached the cottage where lay the cause of this confusion, I looked towards him with veneration; but this feeling was somewhat checked when, in a cold, hard voice, he asked, "*Est-elle morte?*" The answer was in the affirmative; and in a melancholy mood we turned away, and followed the path which led us to the waterfalls, leaving mystery and sorrow behind us in the desolate cottage of the poor woman, of whose history or sufferings we were never to know more.

The waterfalls of Mortain were fortunately, when we saw them, swollen with several days rain; and appeared in great perfection, rushing impetuously along, and tumbling over the huge blocks of granite rocks which impede the course of the torrent. From one projection of rock to another the stream goes foaming down, till it rests at last in a rocky bed, and escapes lower and lower, by various passes, into a meadow at the foot of the gigantic piles around; whose height we became aware of, having descended with the roaring torrent from stage to stage,

till, after much climbing and many admiring pauses amongst caves, and bowers of foliage, and blossoms, we stood by the side of a placid rivulet, in the midst of a plain of emerald grass fit only for fairies' revels. Here, as we lingered on a rustic bridge, the tumult of the waters, now perfectly silent, yet booming in our ears, we were bewildered with the magnificence of the forms we saw on all sides. It seemed as if every height were crowned by a feudal castle, ruined, but existing in every shape of turrets, and loop-holes, and portals, and windows; some detached like watch-towers, and hanging over the valleys; some with walls guarding the pass, and here and there gigantic heads peering over the ravine. We ascended by a beautiful, though very steep way, and found ourselves close to the gardens where the castle once stood, in a most commanding position, looking far over the surrounding valleys.

We afterwards explored the town, which does not present much to interest, but seems surrounded on all sides with delicious walks and romantic scenery. The people are civil, as they always are in Lower Normandy, and ready to go out of their way to oblige. Some weeks could be spent in this place very agreeably, as there is great variety and peculiar beauty in

every part of its vicinity. We were told that several English families had had houses here a few years since, but all have deserted it at present; the town is poor, and the society, once said to be extremely lively, quite destroyed. There appears to be no spirit of improvement, and the little that is done is in the worst possible style of taste.

We hired a carriage to take us to Vire, and experienced all the miseries that four hours' dislocation in a machine without springs, on an indifferent road, could inflict. In the intervals of our suffering we could manage to remark the extreme beauty of the Bocage country. Sourdeval stands well, and though there is no vestige of its castle, and its church is all modern, except a curious carving on one of the walls, it is an interesting place, clean and cheerful, with fine public walks and boulevards. We were greatly amused on the road by meeting a cavalcade consisting of no less than twenty-five horses; on each of which, in gala dresses, and carrying enormous bouquets, sat a man, and behind him a female friend. Closing the train appeared two cabriolets, in which sat others of the party, probably the most important personages, for everything told that this was a wedding. It seemed as if we were witnessing some scene of the

middle ages, so primitive and singular was the effect. The women, though not in *this* case, in these parts frequently ride astride. We met several going to market, and some of a higher condition, attended by a servant.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Bocage.—Vire.—Chateau.—Public Walks.—Les Vaux.—Military Guide.—Basselin.—The Poet's Mill.—The little Fairy.

Voici l'étroit sentier de l'obscure vallée;
Du flanc de ses coteaux pendent des bois épais,
Qui, courbant sur mon front leur ombre entremelée,
Me couvrent tout entier de silence et de paix.

LAMARTINE.

THE entrance to the town of Vire from Mortain, is by a precipitous street which seems almost perpendicular; and, the pavement being remarkably bad, it is a service of danger to mount the hill through a street, narrow, dirty, and old beyond all conception. Projecting roofs and upper stories meeting each other and excluding the light; crowds, as usual, at the doors, gazing with countenances full of gaiety. The hill once surmounted, we drove at a brisker pace through better streets; which, improving by degrees, introduced us to the inn at the op-

posite extremity of the town, where we were to descend. A fine view was now before us, good houses and new roads; and we rejoiced not a little that our journey was at an end, and even agreed with our *conducteur* that nothing could be better than his carriage, which he vaunted and offered us the benefit of to continue our route wherever we pleased. He departed extremely satisfied, though we were several hours longer, he acknowledged, than was customary, and he confessed that his machine was innocent of springs; "*mais elle vous a mené tout de même*," which could not be contradicted. A very different spirit seems to inspire the Virois to that which is observable in their neighbours of Mortain. Nothing is neglected here to render their town agreeable, and every day improvements are making; old streets and houses are being cleared away, for which there is much occasion, and handsome buildings appearing. But what is chiefly remarkable in Vire is the public walks, which are really admirable, both within and without the town. As if to shame the degenerate inhabitants of Mortain, who have destroyed their castle, the Virois have preserved with care all that remains of theirs. It consists of a very grand though not extensive ruin of the Donjon, which stands on a platform at

one extremity of the town, commanding an entire view of the whole, and a prospect over the wide extent of Vaux beneath, unequalled for beauty, richness, and the peculiarity of its features. The ruin itself is very picturesque, being one large high tower cloven by time almost to its base, with a few loop-holes and windows remaining: it is built into the solid rock, of which it seems to form a part, and rises proudly from the fine broad square, planted with three rows of luxuriant trees, and accommodated with seats at intervals, where the inhabitants have a charming promenade, and can enjoy a series of the most splendid views possible. All is neat, clean, and well-arranged; and it is gratifying to remark the effect of recent care and industry where slovenliness and neglect once must have reigned, to judge by the state of the old part of the town, destined shortly, doubtless, to a different fate. From this magnificent elevation you observe, in every situation of the greatest beauty, handsome country-houses belonging to the *bourgeoisie*, and the owners of the countless mills which fill the extensive valleys, or, as they are here called, *Les Vaux de Vire.*

Turning off from the Paris road, adorned, as far as the street extends, with fine mansions enclosed in good gardens, you come to the fish-

ponds, a favourite lounge of the Virois, whose amusement it is to feed the large carp, that come in shoals to the surface of the water, contending boldly with the swans for the crumbs thrown to them. Our landlady most earnestly entreated us not to neglect the necessary duty of paying them a visit, and insisted on filling our hands with bread to distribute to "*ces charmantes petites bêtes.*" This retreat, we found, deserved all her encomiums; and, at every step we advanced, we saw reason to agree with her that the walks, laid out at enormous expence and with admirable neatness and beauty, were all that could be desired to make the town attractive to strangers and delightful to the inhabitants. Nature has provided her woods and hills piled upon each other and numerous terraces, from each of which, as you ascend, views the most varied and charming spread out before you as far as vision can reach; but the wood has been trained into lines, paths have been formed, gravel-walks laid out, and vistas cut wherever the landscape offered the finest effects. This enjoyment is not merely for an hour, but for several leagues the same thing occurs. Turnstiles and pretty painted gates open into stars, from whence branch off woodland ways interminable, leading to the prettiest spots, safe, clean and cheerful. Oc-

casionally you may diverge into the rough wood, and lose yourself, for the summer's day, in all the mazes of the Bocage, which tempts you on; but you are sure to fall again into some prepared walk, which directs you back to your goal. There can be no end to the pleasures of this life "under the green-wood tree," where art and nature combine to please. It must be confessed that the French, taken in general, are not fond of rural scenes and "shadows brown that sylvan loves," unaccompanied by social amusements and ornament. Such walks as these, therefore, are peculiarly adapted to their taste, for they can stroll in company, dressed as smart as they please, without fear of injuring their costume, and yet surrounded by cheerful scenery, fresh air, and having seats placed at intervals to prevent their suffering from the fatigue which they would rather forego any beauty than submit to. We were rather surprised to find that our countrymen have not congregated more in this lovely place, as it seems exactly the sort of country, with all its *agrémens*, which would suit families; where the children could live in the open air, without being exposed to dangers of any kind, yet close to the town; where living is cheap and good, and, as there are a great many inhabitants, there would probably be no want of the

means of education. It is considered extremely healthy; indeed, it cannot be otherwise, from its splendid position and numerous advantages.

The church of Notre Dame is a fine building; the high arches, doors, and some of the windows of early Norman construction. It appears to me that Mr. Gally Knight, having passed it without notice, was not aware that it possessed claims on his attention; his anxiety to reach Mortain, where he was sure to find objects of interest, caused him to neglect this charming place altogether.

It is difficult to describe that which of all the attractions of Vire is the great crown and glory; for words can convey so weakly the impression made on the mind by scenery such as awaits the wanderer amongst the deep dells and hills studded with grey rocks and short brushwood which enclose them. A pleasing gloom spreads along the path you pursue, which winds deeper and deeper into the bosom of the ravine, at the bottom of which runs sparkling along the stream celebrated by more than one poet of the Vaux, whose waters turn a hundred mills of cloth and paper, the murmurs of whose wheels fill the air with a melancholy and continuous sound. Nothing can be more picturesque than these vine-covered houses standing amongst gar-

dens and orchards, built on and against blocks of grey granite, and surrounded with the most beautiful scenery, of a quiet character, altogether opposite to the wide expansive views which meet the eye from the heights immediately round the town of Vire. As you advance in these secluded valleys the romance is a little broken by the sight of high brick buildings which one glance tells you must owe their existence to English workmen, and you learn that an English engineer has been busy amongst the waters. Several steam-mills, admirably constructed, have taken the place of the pretty thatched and moss-grown piles which still retain their position lower down the stream, but will probably before very long give way to structures of greater utility, spoiling the scene, but improving the manufacture. Happily, I have visited these lovely Vaux before more is done, and before the smell of steam has taken the place of the perfume of the heath-bell.

We were accompanied in our rambles by a guide, who, though of quite different character to our "pretty page" of Mortain, was nevertheless extremely amusing. Though introduced to us as the *garçon* who would conduct us into the Vaux, we found him to be an old man who had served the Republic fourteen years before Napoleon was consul. He had been in Holland, in

Spain, &c. and prided himself on his knowledge of all the languages of the enemies of France; this erudition, however, seemed principally confined to the "strange oaths" of each country. Spanish seemed his passion, and he uttered numerous exclamations and indulged us with many proverbs worthy of Sancho. He was very eloquent on the events of the war, spoke of Napoleon and the English *en philosophe*, and seemed to have outlived all prejudice except dislike to steam mills, which spoilt his Vaux. He described to me a certain town in Holland "vis à vis de Londres," where the French were very nearly taking "le Duc de York" prisoner; and he got into singular confusion between His Royal Highness and the Duke of Wellington: at all events he made it quite clear, as all the French can do any day, that we had always been beaten, and that it was rather from a considerate forbearance than from ill-fortune that England was not long ago taken possession of, and made a province of France. Under this happy delusion most of his countrymen of the same, not to say of higher rank, exist, and have repeated the particulars so often that there remains not a shadow of doubt of its correctness.

Having walked for some time amongst the valleys, we began to retrace our steps, and at

an angle of the road sat down on some felled trees by the side of a pretty bridge, opposite to a romantic-looking thatched cottage, which formed so pleasing an object with its background of high grey rocks festooned with grape vine, that I began to sketch it, the more interested on perceiving on a small tablet in front an inscription stating it to be the first house in the *Rue* de Basselin. There, then, I thought probably lived the poet of the Vaux, perhaps in this very house; but while I was musing on the subject, a traveller passing on horseback observed my occupation, and dismounting, with great politeness informed me that I had mistaken the spot, for though this picturesque *Rue* had its name from the poet, the mill and house where he was born and sung was at the other end of the lane. As he spoke, he pointed it out, and I then saw at once the difference in the age of the two buildings. A modern house has been added to the mill, the stream of which is wilder here than in any other part, as it rushes over stones, which form it into a little cataract. Part of the original tenement remains with its striped front, low doors, and projecting stories: immediately opposite rises a magnificent rock, and the road from that point becomes more and more precipitous, breaking into a thousand beauties at every ascent.

Behind the poet's mill, stretching far into the Vaux, is the Coteau des Cordéliers, where once stood the convent of his monkish enemies, who could overlook his movements rather more, probably, than he desired. Nothing can be more romantic and pretty than this situation, and our guide was as much pleased as ourselves at discovering a new feature in the tour, for though he had heard something of the mill, he was ignorant of the poet, and when I told him of the enmity between Basselin and the monks, his Spanish recollections of numerous peccadillos on the part of his old acquaintances of the fraternity revived, not in a manner peculiarly complimentary to the reve-

rend fathers. As we sat enjoying this scene, the clear river rushing along beside us, the waterfalls murmuring on all sides, a bright clear sky, grey fantastic rocks and verdant coteaux surrounding us with beauty; the presence in this quiet place of a little fairy seemed all that was wanting, and as if to complete the picture, we were presently joined by a pretty innocent black-eyed child, of between two and three years old, who, with all the unsuspicious freedom of infancy, came to make acquaintance with us, and to tell us her little stories of new sabots and clean aprons. Such a little chatterbox as Therèse I have seldom seen, though with all her good will her tongue had not yet the power of her imagination. We found that both her father and mother were occupied in the mills, and during their absence she was left to the care of other little girls similarly situated, and thus they wandered about in the sunny valleys, some of their parents stealing occasionally a few minutes to look after them. The air of independence of "*la petite Moriscae*," as our guide, who like most soldiers seemed very fond of children, called her, was peculiarly amusing, and her manners so interesting, that we parted from her with regret after giving her a *bonbon* and the kiss which she put up her pretty little mouth to receive. She was

just the sort of being to live in the poet's valley and haunt the poet's mill.

But I must give a short account of the poet of the Vaux and his follower, which may perhaps be new to the general reader, as well as his poems, which have never been translated into English, and are but little known in France.

CHAPTER IX.

The Bocage and its Poets.*—Basselin and Le Houx.

BASSELIN.

OLIVIER BASSELIN lived about the middle of the fifteenth century. He was the proprietor of a fulling mill amongst the deep valleys which have been already described, which was his court, where flocked around him the subjects of his eloquence and the slaves of his verse. His mill flourished; that is, it produced enough for his moderate wants: and what cared he for the pettish murmurs of his relations, who urged him to increase his wealth and suspend his enjoyments? So long as his vine was fruitful, as his orchards yielded a constant supply of cider and perry, all beside was not worth a thought; and he laughed and sung, and sung and laughed

* The contents of this chapter were published originally in Fraser's Magazine for January, 1840.

again, from night till morn, from morn till dewy eve. And who could refuse to be a sharer in his revelry? who close their ears to his bewitching voice? None, at least, in the whole range of the Vaux de Vire, if we except his natural enemies the monks. The fraternity of his neighbourhood looked darkly down from their comfortable retreat on the descent of the woody hill to which their convent gave a name, and sulkily condemned the mirthful sounds which occasionally reached them in their gloomy cells; for all the valleys were vocal with such songs as the following.

OUR NAMES.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Let us drink as many times
As our names have letters in them;
Sing we laughter-moving rhymes—
Say, who shall the first begin them?
Pour the golden cider high;
Let us inspiration take
From those drops of sunny dye,
Which new mirth and wit awake.
Oh! my name is all too short
For that tide that swiftly passes;
Let me add, to speed our sport,
Letters many as our glasses.
Were the bowl less full of bliss,
John or Tom might pass between us;
But with mantling wine like this,
Call me Marcus Antoninus!

This specimen of the style of Basselin will show to what class of song-writers he belongs. He was the first, as he is perhaps the best author of the *chansons à boire*, for which the French are so remarkable: and, when we consider that, of all nations, they are the least given to inebriety, such songs cease to inspire any ideas but those of friendly conviviality and cheerful hilarity. Not so indulgently, however, thought the Cordeliers. Perhaps, being good judges, and aware, besides, that the Vaux could boast of *vin du bon*, they felt uneasy and disappointed at the impossibility of joining in the revels* which were so much enjoyed by their less pious neighbours. However this might be, they ceased not to inveigh against the gaiety, of which offending the

* That the monks of those days knew how to provide creature comforts, doubtless to enable them to go through their arduous duties conformably, is proved by many records of the consumption of their abbeys: amongst others, the monastery of Clugni, on the Garonne, was remarkable for its extensive cellars, the contents of which were of the first quality; and its larders were filled with the choicest dainties. Bodily labour was required by the rules of the order, therefore to support the body for the purpose was requisite. An early author, however, who gives an account of the abbey, affirms that he saw nothing approaching to labour, save "shelling beans, weeding the garden, and kneading the bread." So high, however, was the character of this order for sanctity, that, in England alone, there were twenty-seven monasteries of Cluniac monks.

miller-minstrel was the "head and front." Occasionally, indeed, their wrath broke out, and severe were the censures issued against the merry poet, whose spirit nothing could daunt, though he was far from being entirely insensible to their attacks, which he warded off with such weapons as were left him:—

CONSTANCY.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

They call me idle, vain, and ill,
They laugh to scorn my minstrel skill,
And bid me cease my lay;
But let them rail, the same to me,
I cannot with their vision see,
And bear it as I may.

Deem not, dear mistress of my soul,
My cherish'd friend, my trusty bowl,
The hate and envy that beset me
Can make me faithless, and forget thee.

Should I become so wise or weak,
As leave untouched the wine I cherish,
My former vows of fondness break,
And let those drops of treasure perish;
Should I—a traitor, let them stay,
And lose their sweetness day by day,
Till sour, and pale, and tasteless grown,
'Twere drink for enemies alone;
The deed were base—unworthy me,
Unworthy all I 've sung of thee.

No; in the ruby of the cup,
A little sun looks smiling up;

And, while it smiles and sparkles so,
Who shall its magic charm forego,
Or say the vine's rich fruit was made
To be neglected and betray'd?

Olivier might have been a rich proprietor, and might in time have owned more mills, and built himself a better mansion in his favourite valley, as modern millers have done, had he been formed of other stuff than what makes a poet—he might have propitiated the monks, and endowed their abbey; but he was a happy careless wight, taking no heed for the morrow, enjoying the present sunshine like the grasshopper on his banks, chirping and sporting while the sky was cloudless. His mill turned as it pleased; and, content with whatever it produced, he carried on his summer-life of amusement, and never cared to stroll beyond the mountains that hemmed in his happy valley. Unlike the earlier bards, whose lays he superseded, he refrained from repaying his enemies, the monks, in their own coin, by vituperation or ridicule, but bore their ill-nature merrily. His family, fearing that his fortune would suffer materially by what they considered his dissipated course of life, influenced, of course, by priestly advice, had him put *en curatelle;* that is, under the care and influence of these tutors. This transaction pro-

bably gave rise to the following, which does not breathe a spirit of deep repentance:—

MY ELIXIR.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

The treasure* that for many a year
Philosophers have sought,
I seek not long nor vainly here—
This mine with gold is fraught;
The sparkling grape shall yield me light,
My goblet be the furnace bright.

Rich wine the sunbeams shall supply,
That never drop of water knew;
Cider shall be my mercury,
Whose fruit in golden clusters grew:
These in my furnace will I throw,
And see what treasures thence shall flow!

Though all my wealth I sacrifice,
Food for these labours to supply,
I grudge not while I seek the prize,
And learn such glorious alchemy.

If by my art, O juice divine!
I may at length proclaim thee mine,
I care not for the angry scowl
That flashes from beneath the cowl,
Though all the monks, of all the nation,
Have given me excommunication.

This may, perhaps, be a covert allusion to the learned researches of his pious foes; the elixir of life and powder of projection being the great object of all study at that period, as it continued to be long after.

Olivier had not always lived, a secluded minstrel, in the Vaux de Vire; he had been in stirring scenes, and taken part in the enthusiasm produced by the exhortations of the wise and tender Agnes Sorel, and the glorious example of the heroic and unfortunate Pucelle, while Charles VII. was struggling for his birthright. He is reported to have been in the famous battle of Fourmigni, a representation of which, in quaint painting, is still shown to the visitor of the tapestry of Matilda, at Bayeux, that battle, so important for France, and so disastrous for the English, who were losing, step by step, under the ill-fated Henry VI. all that his great father had gained. The poet is said, however, not to have equalled in bravery his predecessor, the minstrel Taillefer; but, like Horace, whom he occasionally quotes, appears to have preferred peace to war. His education had not been neglected. Probably, he derived some classical knowledge from that very fraternity whose precepts and care he so ill repaid; or it might be that, like most men of genius, he had instructed himself in a great measure, and his observation of men and things had stood him in stead of better teachers. That his genius was not for war, is evident by the following:—

MY WARFARE.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Cæsar was not half so bold,
  As I am in war like this,
While the sparkling cup I hold,
  And the bowl's full brim I kiss:
Better wine and song to cheer us,
Than the sounds of havoc near us.

This the fort I would assail,
  These the flashes most delight;
This the conquest I would hail,
  Valiant in so just a fight:
Heroes sink to rise no more—
We, to revel as before.

Let my face the goblet hide,
While I quaff the blushing tide;
Wherefore should the temper'd steel
Clothe my form from head to heel?
Let the helm for others shine,
But my locks with ivy twine.

'Tis but cold to watch the stars
  From some rampart's dreary height;
We, amidst these happy wars,
  Sit beside the fire all night.
Let the captain mount the breach,
Safer sport our revels teach;
Truer fame and honour dwell
In these drops of muscadel.

But forget not, while we drink,
  Reason may be with us still;
Linger not on danger's brink,
  Lest they call us vain and ill:
Pause we here—our warfare end,
Let us prove good wine a friend.

This is not the poet's only song exhorting to temperance; though probably his contempt of the pleasures of the table, as far as the viands were concerned, did not obtain him more credit with the portly Cordeliers:—

PREFERENCE OF WINE.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Had Adam shunn'd the meal that spread
Through all the world such misery,
And drunk an honest cup instead,
'Twere better far for you and I.
And lest, as his, such fault be mine,
I still forswear the table's feast,
And live content with rosy wine,
Wine in good store, and of the best.
And, therefore, at the gorgeous board,
When viands smoke in rich array,
I turn me from the tempting hoard,
And tow'rds the wine my glances stray:
Where the heart points the eye is strain'd.
Then bid the bowl our bosoms cheer:
A glass fill'd high—not quickly drain'd,
Is not a glass we like in Vire.

His antipathy to water is not concealed. In one of his lays he has a quaint conceit, not a little amusing:—

THE GARDEN AND THE POET.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Our flowers decline, our gardens gay,
For lack of moisture fade away;

And, if I cease this cup to drain,
Like them I pine for want of rain.
'Twere a sad fate: then fill once more,
And long the welcome torrent pour.
My nature like my garden shows;
The only difference I see
Is, water there fresh life bestows,
While wine alone is fit for me.

We fear the finances of the poet, about the date of the two following songs, began to feel the effect of his *good taste;* and we cannot help regretting that the auguries of his enemies appear to be fulfilled, who "prophesied that, late or soon," he would become a poor man. In the first, there is no doubt that he is discontented; in the second, a forced resignation reigns, concluding with hearty abuse of the liquor to which he had no vocation:—

THE PIS-ALLER.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Although of Lower Normandy
A native 'tis confest am I,
I feel my spirit must have come
From Orleans, its real home,
Where claret clear as crystal gleams
And tempts towards its flowing streams.
My soul a denizen should be
Where wine is best, and flows most free.
But money spent, and credit gone,
Cider must be my drink alone!

WATER'S ANATHEMA.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Wherefore sing the praise of wine,
While the golden apple glows?
Though its juice be less divine,
Well its fame the Norman knows:
Orange-flavour'd, gold and bright,
See it sparkles in our sight!

Give the Frenchmen* wine at will;
Give the old a cup—'tis well;
Or to woman, for 'twill still
Clamours of our peace the knell!

Let the thirsty German boast
All the charms of potent beer;
Let the English drink their toast—
Suits to vulgar souls such cheer!
Bachelors may, in their mood,
Perry drink in solitude;
All may find some secret worth
In all juice that springs from earth:
But for water—'tis the worst
Bev'rage, poorest, most accurst!
Executioner of all
Generous or good we call!
They who drink it, when they sing,
With loud voice, "God bless the king!"
Merit only, senseless logs!
Their monarch should be King of Frogs!

* The Normans at this period did not consider themselves Frenchmen, though, from the time of Philip Augustus, Normandy had been reunited to the crown of France.

Basselin had the rare good fortune of being a prophet in his own country; and he realised Goldsmith's wish to return amongst his fellow-swains, and be looked upon by them with admiration and delight. We have reason to believe that he was satisfied with his circumscribed fame; but whether to the end of his life he continued in his valleys, or whether the decline of his fortunes forced him again to the wars, is an uncertain point; or whether he perished at the siege of Vire by the English, it is impossible to decide. I am inclined to think that the expression in a *vau-de-vire* of the period, which has given rise to this latter supposition, ought rather to be looked upon as raillery:—

> "Hellas; Olivier Vasselin!
> N'orrons nous point de vos nouvelles?
> Vous ont les Engloys mis à fin?"

The circumstances of his death are not recorded by any historian of the time; and even his zealous admirer, Le Houx, makes no mention of it: with this, however, we have nothing to do. It is certain, that during his life he was not only gay, witty and joyous himself, but the cause of the same in others, and so continued to the end of time. From the period when his lively songs delighted the convivial meetings throughout the Bocage, the *contes* and *fabliaux*, which formerly

reigned supreme, were abandoned; and if we consider the length of some of these, it cannot but be a relief to think how happy "a gay party"* must have been "when relieved from the pressure" of such tiresome entertainments, and hailing the "champagne" of Olivier's sparkling *vaux-de-vires*. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm which the lays of Basselin excited in the Bocage, it was years after his death before he began to be thoroughly known throughout France. This is scarcely surprising, when the situation of his abode is considered. The almost inaccessible position of the Vaux in those days of bad roads and difficult communication precluded the possibility of much intercourse with other parts of the kingdom; war, too, desolated the country, and it required some years of quiet to bring out all the concealed treasures which had been hidden to escape its ravages. As soon, however, as time allowed, a host of imitators spread themselves abroad; the style and manner of Basselin were generally adopted, and the original poet was lost

* See the lively song of Moore, "If ever you 've seen a gay party." That unrivalled master of the *gaie science*, immeasurably superior as he is to our miller-minstrel, has, nevertheless, many touches of wit and gaiety not dissimilar. But we might perhaps as well cite Anacreon himself. "There is an *M* in Macedon and in Monmouth."

in the *mêlée.* The name of *voix-de-ville,* or *vaude-ville,* was given to those songs, and no one inquired what was its origin. The fanciful etymology which has gained ground appeared natural enough, viz, that these songs were *mots à la mode,* similar to the *passecaille* of the Spaniards—songs *sung in towns;* or in the streets—*passerue.* The learned editors of Basselin's works have, however, now set this matter at rest, and restored to the poet the honour which is his due, confirming his just title of "Vrai Père du Vaudeville."

LE HOUX.

About the middle of the sixteenth century another poet became known in these romantic valleys, who followed closely the steps of the earlier bard; of whom he was so enthusiastic an admirer, that it is with some difficulty his imitations can be distinguished from the originals of Basselin. Not only was he imbued with much of the genius of Olivier, but the enmity and hatred of the former enemies of that poet appear to have been reproduced in his time,—for he was equally an object of reprobation and animosity. Jean le Houx, surnamed Le Romain, was an advocate of Vire—one of the most eloquent of his time;

but he neglected his profession, as Basselin had done his mill, to attach himself to the fine arts. He was not only a distinguished poet, but a painter. The peculiar bent of his genius, however, was towards the composition of convivial songs, in the style of his predecessor. The following is one of several written on the occasion of the Fête of St. Ives, patron of lawyers :—

THE FÊTE-DAY.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Ah ! gentle, lively month of May,
The sweetest, fairest of the year,—
Hasten thy best—thy nineteenth day :
Return, with mirth and wine to cheer
The bard who holds thy memory dear.

On that bright day is swept from hence
The toil and labour of the law ;
Then pleaders prove their eloquence
In praise of wine,—no pause, no flaw,
And courts and judge no longer awe.

Should they from habit wrangle still,
The same to me—I heed them not ;
While songs go round, and cups they fill,
By me at least is care forgot,—
I envy not the highest lot.

Better to solve the mysteries
The goblet's rosy depth displays,
Than thread the darkest path that lies
In tortuous law's uncertain maze.
Law strews my locks with wintry snow
Wine casts youth's roses on my brow.

Le Houx edited the *vaux-de-vire* of Basselin, having altered their antique phraseology into that of his own time, now little less obscure. The priests of his neighbourhood saw, with much annoyance, the revival of those lays which they hoped were silenced for ever, and failed not to express their displeasure. The bard, however, was not to be put down without as many struggles as his predecessor. He thus expresses himself in one of his *vaux-de-vires*, in imitation of the older poet, for whose sake he suffered :—

WINE AND WISDOM.—VAU-DE-VIRE.

Better chant the vau-de-vire,
  Sing the praise of gen'rous wine,
Than behold the lurking sneer,
And the double meaning hear,
From foul envy's bitter tongue,
Doing absent comrades wrong,—
  Blighting thus the glowing vine.

One may drink, and yet be wise,—
  One may sing, nor yet be mad;
Wisdom in the goblet lies,—
  Verse and wine make mortals glad.
Prize we not the nightingale?
She has told us many a tale;
But the cup has told us more,
And has yet immortal store.

Basselin has coined each drop,—
Let us glean the golden crop;
Let us tell how Vire was blest
While her minstrel she possess'd—
He who drank and sang the best.

The continual appearance of similar effusions, and the reputation acquired by their author, enraged the clergy to such an extent, that with one common accord they resolved to attack the culprit in a vital point, and refused him absolution till his fault was expiated. Perhaps one of his best poems was written about this period:—

THE POET'S VINDICATION.

I will not disavow the lays
  I made in idle hours of mirth,
Although they merit little praise,
  And from a thoughtless brain had birth:
But were the censure true, that aught
  I breathed in youth, without design,
Had power to raise one evil thought—
  Which foes alone could deem was mine,—
Did not my lays their malice wrong,
I'd break my cup, and cease my song!

Alas! 'tis all too late, I fear,—
  My songs, or good or ill, are known;
For every vale of lovely Vire
  Learns to repeat them as her own.

What is there left for me but this—
To sing—but better than before;
And lest my numbers sound amiss,
Or have less music than of yore?
Less envy, and more friends be mine,
And be the bard forgot in wine!

At this epoch, the dread of heresy, and the necessity of severity to repress its growing influence, probably occasioned the harshness of the clergy; as it is not unlikely that Le Houx, like most of the thinking spirits of his time, might be inclined to liberal notions. The following song, supposed to be composed on the journey he made, with other pilgrims, to Rome, does not breathe a peculiarly devout sentiment:—

SONG.—THE PILGRIMS.

We are pilgrims doomed to roam
From the shady vales of Vire,
Seeking far away from home
Better hap than waits us here:
Lest our steps be sad and slow,
Fill the goblet as we go.

To forget fair Normandy
Ill would suit us, chosen few;
Let us, while the sun is high,
All our ancient songs renew;
In the shade, as we recline,
Quaffing cups of generous wine.

See, the way is long and drear,
Empty flasks are sorry cheer!
In the name of every saint,
Let not weary pilgrims faint;
Rome will want full many a prayer,
If we fail your dole to share.
Lest our holy zeal decline,
Give the weary pilgrim wine!

This journey to Rome obtained him his surname of Le Romain. Whether he undertook it as much for amusement as devotion, his object appears to have been gained, as far as the obtaining absolution; but he was obliged to suppress his edition of the works of Basselin for the present. He allowed a few years to elapse, and then ventured on another and an enlarged edition. Perhaps it was to expiate this crime that he founded eight masses for the poor, as we find it recorded in the archives of Vire. His death happened not long after, in 1616. When wandering through the beautiful glens of Vire, and observing at every twenty yards the ivied and thatched roof of some romantic mill, and listening to the continued murmur of the gushing stream, interrupted in its course by innumerable mills, all flourishing, and all at work, one cannot but consider with surprise that the poet in his time found reason to deplore the decay of a commerce which has since then revived in all its

vigour. His lament is poetical; but, we are happy to know, has not now the merit of truth :—

LAMENT FOR THE MILLS.

I came to lovely Vire once more,
And saw the ruin spread around,
Where first our poet's skilful lore
The echoes woke with cheerful sound;
I asked the valleys and the hills,
What hand has stopped our tuneful mills?

Our fathers lived these streams beside,
The snowy fleece their constant care;
And Basselin, our valleys' pride,
With music filled the balmy air.
But now, ye valleys and ye hills,
What hand has stopped our tuneful mills?

Where rise these thymy banks of ours,
Where flows our river's silver line;
The golden cider, crowned with flowers,
Might well be deemed a drink divine.
But this is past; ye vales, ye hills,
What hand has stopped our tuneful mills?

Here sang the bard from night till day,
As sing the birds on every tree;
The name he gave his merry lay
Immortal through all time shall be.
But oh, ye valleys and ye hills,
Time has destroyed your tuneful mills!

CHAPTER X.

La Bretagne.—Pontorson.—Dol.—Antiquities.—Dinan.—Mont Jersual.—Du Guesclin.—Tiphaine Raguenel.—St. Sauveur.—St. Suliac.—The Asses of Rigourdennes.—Wivirn.—Du Guesclin's heart.—Ramparts.—Towers.—Fauteuil of the Duchess Anne.

LONG the road from Avranches to Pontorson there is nothing very remarkable, and the latter town appears a mere depôt for the sand brought from the grêve of Pont-au-boult; the travelling is consequently very disagreeable as there is no interval in the procession of carts for leagues, and to escape the dust is impossible.

Pontorson is the last town in Normandy,* and so ugly and flat was the country, that we began

* Pontorson deserves notice as having been the place where one of those romantic acts of chivalry was performed which were frequent in that age. Probably the now mutilated church was the scene of the solemn engagement entered into by Du Guesclin and Olivier de Clisson, those two great captains, as

to imagine that we had left all beauty of scenery behind. By and by, however, as the sand carts diminished, the road became less flat, and we soon commenced the ascent of a mountain, to which even that approaching Avranches could not be compared. With infinite toil to the horses, we at length reached the summit, and, as if the mountain had been a screen placed between the two districts to prevent their discovering each other's treasures, suddenly we found spread out before us, from the stupendous Tertre de la Clef, a glorious prospect, extending into infinite space: the country was now all fine and bold.

The Mont Dol comes upon the sight as you advance, and as quickly disappears in the winding way: it has a singular appearance, rising up as if another Mont St. Michel had been transported into the interior of the country; it seems not of a piece with the surrounding scenery, and strikes the eye like a strange apparition. A church crowns the rock, which is all that remains

brothers-in-arms, to aid and support each other against every one, except the King of France, his brothers, the Viscomte de Rohan, and some others, to divide everything which they acquired in war, and mutually to communicate everything which they heard contrary to the honour or interest of the other. — *See Lobineau.*

James's History of Edward the Black Prince.

of the once celebrated monastery. You see the mount again on entering the town, and here indeed, new features await you, and you feel that you are in Brittany.

It is impossible to form an idea of the appearance of Dol: all that we had heard of antique and monastical seemed collected in these streets and in the *façades* of these houses. It has the effect of having been *all* monastery: every house is supported by pillars, arches, and cloisters, looking more Roman than Gothic, all stone and all ruinous. So narrow are the streets that how the heavy diligence contrived to pass through them, without crushing every object on each side, appeared a miracle! Every human being living in the town was at the doors of the dark dens which serve for habitations, many sitting, as usual, on chairs, which, amidst shouts, cries, laughter, and every sort of confusion, were hurried out of the way, just, as it seemed, in time, for our horses rushed madly down through the tumultuous lines of natives, regardless of consequences.

It was market day and all the population was in activity, swarming from all quarters, the women wearing extraordinary shaped caps, some *crête de coq*, like helmets, plaited in small plaits and white as snow; others of a form similar to

those at Granville, but raised into a peak in front, precisely like the heads in manuscripts of the fourteenth century, the men's caps and general costume answering the same description as to period, looking like living representations of the Roman de la Rose.

Quantities of coloured wool filled every second window and were piled in bales to every ceiling, the bright tints contrasting curiously with the sombre shades of the dwelling. On the whole a more extraordinary town never was seen, and we could only rejoice that we had changed our intention of remaining there a few days to see its curiosities, as where we could have been accommodated was a difficult problem to solve. We, however, had plenty of time to see the fine cathedral, which is very magnificent and undergoing extensive repairs that appear conducted in good taste. It stands well, and a sort of boulevard, on the place before it, has a neat effect: the ruined walls, covered with ivy, show its former extent, which must have been very great: there are some beautiful windows of the decorated style, a porch entrance, exquisitely carved in foliage,—the stone so pure that it has the effect of alabaster,—and two fine towers of different periods, one early Norman, similar to those of the Abbaye aux Dames, at Caen.

We made an amusing mistake respecting the antiquities of Dol, which was, however, natural enough, impressed, as one could not fail to be, with the "auld warld" appearance of everything. It is the custom there, as if they prided themselves on avoiding modern habits, to carve the name and profession of the owner, in stone, in ancient letters, over each door; the frequent recurrence of this had amazed us, as we doubted not these inscriptions all dated from the middle ages; but we were undeceived on coming into a faubourg where the light of day *could* penetrate, and where the fact of 1830 could not be disputed.

Whoever desires to convince himself that scenery equal to that of Switzerland can be attained much nearer home, and wishes to pass a few weeks or months in one of the most varied, beautiful, and interesting parts of France, should cross from Southampton to St. Malo, and, embarking in the steam-boat, glide along through the charming banks of the Rance, till he reaches the port of Dinan. Or, if he arrives, as we did, from Normandy, he will, by the time he finds himself on the old bridge, have already been in ecstacies of admiration for more than half way between Dol and Dinan. The descent from the mountain that on this side overhangs the river

is fearfully steep, and you look down, suddenly, on what appears a large town, divided by a broad stream, which runs between banks covered with verdure, along rich meadows shaded with fine trees. A range of hills, rising above each other, appear on the opposite side, crowned, at intervals, on their very verge, with fine houses and gardens; on every pinnacle, as the carriage cautiously descends, new dwellings, perched like the nests of eagles, gleam amongst the thick foliage.

On reaching the picturesque bridge, however, you are surprised to find that your journey is far from ended. You are now at the port only, and as, amidst the crowds who always congregate at all places to hail the avatar of the diligence, you whirl along, a sudden turn discovers that you are about to ascend a road steeper, if possible, and more circuitous, than that just passed. You look down on one side on the fine river, pursuing its course along a precipitous ravine, frowning with stupendous rocks, or smiling with cultivated fields: the mysterious habitations which before attracted your attention, appearing from height to height like beacons. Presently huge antique walls, as high as the eye can reach, on the summit of the lofty hill of Jersual, which flanks the road on one side, begin to appear:

towers and battlements encrease as you go on—now a huge round tower; then another beyond the opposite corner; then a handsome modern house, with balconies *painted red;* another wind of the almost perpendicular pass — piles of rocks, with festoons of parasite plants hanging in drapery from above — more walls, more mansions, a little more exertion of the tired horses, and the Porte St. Louis and Dinan is gained.

The first pause is now at the hotel in the Place du Guesclin! the name alone tells a thousand tales of "battles, sieges, fortunes," and the statue of the hero opposite its windows confirms them. We stopped at the Hôtel des Postes, one of the few remaining houses which might have stood to witness the famous combat between the indignant chief and the English knight who had forgotten the law of arms in his eagerness to take the brother of the champion prisoner. The facts of the case are as follows.

During the truce of forty days which had been concluded between the forces of France and England in 1359, when the town of Dinan, defended by the renowned Bertrand, was on the point of yielding to superior numbers, Olivier du Guesclin, the brother of the commander, while making an excursion in the environs, was met by the enemy; and Thomas of Cantorbie, an English captain,

unable to resist the temptation thrown in his way, made the gallant warrior his prisoner. On hearing of this outrage, no words can express the mortification of the illustrious brother of the captive: he considered the action a slur on the character of knighthood, and, without delay, instantly set out for the English camp, presented himself before the Duke of Lancaster, recounted the wrong done to his brother, and challenged the offender Cantorbie to single combat. The lists were prepared; the Duke confiding entirely in the honour of Du Guesclin, expressed his willingness to witness the battle, and in the presence of the most distinguished knights on either side the combat took place. The Breton hero was the vanquisher, and his brother not only rescued from bondage, but sent back by the Duke of Lancaster with presents, while to Bertrand the horse and armour of the discomfited English knight were awarded.

A banquet was given by the conqueror to his noble enemies in the town of Dinan, at which all the ladies of the neighbourhood assisted, among the most conspicuous of whom was the fair dame who, by the occult knowledge in which she was a proficient, had predicted that the victory would fall to Du Guesclin: whether this was the beginning of their loves is not ascer-

tained, but probably the hero did not allow the festivities to pass without expressing to the lady his sense of her good opinion, and no doubt decided her to accept him not only as her knight but her lord.

In the Rue de la Croix, not far from the Hôtel de Ville, is still shown an ancient house with turret stairs known as the abode of the learned beauty Tiphaine; it was here she pursued those studies which gained her so high a reputation, and which had she not been the wife of so great a captain might have proved more dangerous than useful, as all knowledge was then looked upon as magic. From this house, doubtless, set out the marriage procession when she rewarded his valour with the hand sought in vain by so many rivals; and here, during his sojourns at Dinan, the mighty chief always took up his abode. The only part of the house likely, however, to have formed part of his residence is a small tower of the period; the defences, the moats, the bridges and the halls which must have then existed, are swept away by time, and all that the anxious visitor observes is a black dirty building in one of the oldest and narrowest streets.

Another curious house is situated in the Rue de la Vieille Poissonnerie, at the angle where it

joins the Rue de la Lainerie, streets expressive of their ancient occupants; this house, the date of which is 1366, was formerly destined to afford hospitality to all pilgrims who passed through Dinan.

It has been conjectured that the name of the town was derived from the worship of Diana, to whom an altar was raised here: it is difficult to look at the curious and antique ornamental carving on the façade of the church of St. Sauveur, without leaning to the opinion that a pagan hand has sculptured many of those grotesque figures; and that the rest were added in an age not far removed from that in which the goddess was reverenced in her temple embosomed in woods.

The precise period of the foundation of this curious old church is not known, the architecture of various times has been employed in its construction, and it is evident that the façade and part of the nave are much earlier than the rest. The sculptures which appear above the principal portal are of the most extraordinary character, —personages having the costume of Egyptians, hippogryphs, wyverns, and other strange animals. This sort of carving frequently appears on the capitals of pillars in many churches of early construction, but it seldom exists on so large a scale

or so conspicuously as on the front of St. Sauveur.

In M. le Baron du Taya's very curious and valuable work entitled "Opuscules Bretons," on Celtic-Armorican coins, he describes some pieces of money found near Amanlis in Brittany, which have, from the singularity of the figures engraved on them, excited much speculation among the learned. Among others he describes some which have considerable similarity to the fantastic forms exhibited on the church of St. Sauveur: he cites M. Boisserée, who in his description of the Cathedral of Cologne makes this remark: "Even in the middle ages gothic architecture is not merely capricious, it is all symbolical. Those groups of dwarfs, apes, monsters, satyrs with extravagant shapes, are purposely contrasted with the saints and angels, to typify the good and evil spirits who watch around the house of the Lord." The struggle between spiritualism and sensualism is intended to be understood in these singular medleys of sacred and what would appear profane. It must, however, be confessed that the extravagant grotesque sometimes exhibited is difficult to reconcile with serious ideas, just as the mysticism of Hafiz and the host of Persian poets is puzzling to the understanding, always on the stretch to transfer mundane expressions to sacred meanings.

That some of these carvings may be the remains of pagan worship, appears by no means improbable: the temple of Diana or Apollo was of course changed afterwards into a Christian church, and other ornaments were added: legends were invented to account for many of the symbolical forms which it might have been considered better not to destroy in the first instance, and to explain away in the next at the expense of truth or common sense. As there is not a church or cathedral remaining which does not exhibit fragments of some monstrous legend, this is perhaps as lenient a way of accounting for such absurdities as can be desired.

Griffins were consecrated to Apollo. Apollo is the Gallic Belenus, and the worship of Belus is said to be the most ancient of idolatries. Mercury was sometimes confounded with Apollo. Cesar thought he traced in the Gallic worship that of Mercury, probably the Egyptian Mercury, Thot-Trismegistus. This may explain the Egyptian figures on the church in question, and the serpent which coils above the pillars may belong as well to Indian or Egyptian worship as to the Christian. Idolatry and heresy are sometimes thought to be portrayed by these frightful shapes, but there are sometimes such peculiar

features attached to them that a less vague explanation seems necessary to satisfy the curiosity they excite. Amongst the "shapes" on St. Sauveur are several which look like hogs; now the hog was dedicated to Freia, a divinity who answered to Astarté, *Diana* and Venus. The flesh of hogs was the food of heroes killed in battle, who feasted in the halls of Valhalla: the fondness for the same food has assuredly descended to the Bretons of the present day: whether that is any argument in favour of the opinion that they worshipped Astarte, it is not easy to decide.

One group which appeared to me of *asses*, I am not unwilling to explain by the following legend, which is current in this part of the country.

In the time of Saint Suliac there was a farm, in the meadows attached to which a drove of asses belonging to the village of Rigourdenne, were in the habit of feeding. On the opposite side of the river was the inviting garden of Saint Suliac, and urged by curiosity or a grosser motive (or inspired perhaps by the evil one), these animals set off in a body every morning, crossed the stream, and were sure to be found on this forbidden ground committing all sorts of devastation. The greedy and intrusive beasts went on

for some time with impunity, at length the patience of Saint Suliac was quite exhausted, and coming upon them suddenly, he so terrified them by his cries that they all prepared to take flight in the utmost confusion, when it was discovered that their heads, which they had turned over their shoulders to glance at their enemy as they scampered off, remained fixed on their spine in an opposite position to that intended by nature, and no effort could ever alter them from that time; thus they remained examples to the neighbouring country of the punishment inflicted on the greedy, and living proofs of the miracle performed by the saint. A picture in relief of this wonderful event was long exhibited in the parish church of St. Suliac, and the account believed and wondered at till the great besom of the Revolution swept away all its traces except where the strange-shaped and twisted-necked animals on St. Sauveur's church represent the same miracle.

Another legend is recounted connected with this part of the country, to which it is not impossible that some of the other wonderful animals on the walls may have reference. Formerly, in one of the deep caverns at that turn of the river called the *pointe de Garrot*, dwelt a hideous Wivern, who spread his desolating influence

throughout the environs. By means of the prayers of a blessed anchorite, perhaps St. Suliac himself, this venomous monster was at length overcome, and a religious ceremony consecrated the memory of that circumstance until the before-named period, when neither dragons nor asses were left in peace! On a certain day in the year, the parish of St. Suliac came in procession with banners displayed to accomplish a vow of devotion on this spot: the curate then and there fulminated an exorcism and excommunication against the defunct Wyvern, whose name of Garrot the caverns still retain, a name probably the same as that of *Garou* — any object of terror of which *il faut se garer*—as *Loup garou*. As the parts adjacent bear the appellation of *Goule d'Enfer*, doubtless some terrible event connected with the powers of darkness took place here: old mariners,—particularly gifted in this way throughout the world,—have seen blue lights issuing from caves hereabouts, and mysterious figures flitting here and there, and have heard confused noises amongst the hills. With so much accredited testimony, it is rather hard upon St. Suliac that his very existence has been disputed, even on the spot where he was *en son vivant* so undoubted a benefactor to his neighbours!

The interior of the church of St. Sauveur has nothing to attract notice beyond one monument at which every one pauses with interest. This is a tomb surmounted by a sepulchral urn, which, having no beauty of architecture to recommend it, we passed several times, till we suddenly became aware that enclosed in the centre was the identical stone which had once covered the buried heart of the Great Captain, Bertrand Du Guesclin. His arms rudely carved (a spread-eagle crossed by a constable's baton) are repeated twice on the stone, and between them appears *a heart.* Beneath is this inscription.

Cy gist : le : Cueur : de Missire :
bertran : du : Gueaquin en : son :
vivant : Constiable : de France : qui :
trespassa : le : XIII^{e} jour : de : jullet :
lan : mil : III^{e} iiii^{xx} dont : son :
Corps : repos avecques : ceulx : des :
roys a Sainct : denis : en : France.

The church of the Jacobins where Tiphaine was buried, and where Du Guesclin sent his heart to her,* has been destroyed. All that remains of it is now used as a market, and a few private houses are built into the walls.

* His dying request was, that his heart should be buried in her tomb.

The church of St. Malo has a fine choir and is a curious antique edifice, but the interior is without interest beyond its venerable arches, and the solemn gloom which reigns within its walls: there are some remains of painted glass in the windows.

Behind the church of St. Sauveur, the exterior of which is undergoing extensive repairs, and where a variety of beautiful architecture of different ages may be observed, is situated the cemetery, too close to the town, but flanked by the high rampart walls, on which are the promenades called "de St. Sauveur," perhaps the most picturesque, and presenting the most extensive views of any: numerous gardens, suspended as it were on terraces, give a joyousness to the scene which the vicinity of the *cimetière* might otherwise injure; seats are placed here and there, and from every point a delicious prospect can be obtained. From a fine tower at the extremity, you overlook the port of Dinan and the course of the river Rance, with its flocks of wild ducks and occasional sails, its lovely banks and fantastic windings, the antique bridge and the gigantic mountains beyond.

It is impossible, however, to decide as to what part of the ramparts which surround this magnificent town is the most to be admired: every-

where the views are unbounded; at one side you can, on a clear day, see rising from the sea, the shadowy form of Mont St. Michel, and from another elevation appears Mont Dol, springing as suddenly from the earth. Here you observe the rich country and cultivated fields that lead to the Mont du Saint Esprit — there glitters the stream which bathes the walls of the exquisite little village of Lehon, whose ruined abbey and the towers of whose castle appear amongst the foliage. Private houses, handsome and well-built, appear on every height; fine public buildings, hospitals, manufactories, gleam on the summit of hills of various elevation, and the enormous towers and walls of the town form picturesque objects wherever you turn.

The enormous donjon of St. Louis is in good preservation and rises majestically above the others; it is now used as a prison, and the sight of the strongly-barred windows with haggard faces peeping through, keeps up the gloomy character of the venerable pile; though unfortunately it is close to the promenade, and the voices of the prisoners can be distinctly heard; a circumstance somewhat annoying, as these worthies are perfectly unceremonious in their addresses to the passers by. This tremendous tower communicates by a gallery with the *tour*

de Coëtquen, another splendid pile, which now serves as a powder depôt. It appears that these are the remains of the ancient château of the Dukes of Bretagne, whose favourite residence was Dinan. A stone seat is shown, called *le fauteuil de la Duchesse Anne;* and in these walls all the chivalry and beauty of the court were accustomed to assemble.

CHAPTER XI.

History of Dinan.—Jean de Montfort.—Legends of Bretagne. Fontenelle le Ligueur.

INAN was, from very early times, the scene of contentions between rival chiefs, and frequently a prey to one party or another. Its commanding position made it a desirable acquisition and a dangerous possession, and ceaseless were the attacks it had to suffer. William the Conqueror besieged the town, whither he followed Conan, second Duke of Brittany, who had fled before him from Dol, and Dinan, unable to resist his victorious arms, and who was obliged to yield after a few days. The tapestry of Bayeux records this historical fact. Several of the Breton barons formed a friendship with William and accompanied him to England; among others was the Vicomte de Dinan.

Under Henry II, the bourg of Lehon was desolated, and all the houses burnt except those

that belonged to the priory. After this it was agreed between Henry and Louis le Jeune that the castle of Lehon should be destroyed; the beautiful ruins that still remain are, however, those of a later time, as the castle was rebuilt, and existed in 1402.

During the contentions between the houses of Blois and Montfort, supported by England and France, Dinan was reduced to ashes. Scarcely recovered from its ruins, it was again attacked by Edward III. whose fury was excited by the resolute refusal of the Bretons to agree to the disadvantageous terms on which King John of France was to be ransomed. Du Guesclin at the head of six hundred men, lent the Dinannais his aid, and it was at this period that several of his romantic adventures took place.

The heroic Countess of Montfort saw her son, Jean IV, in possession of this persecuted town after a long and sanguinary struggle: his vacillating conduct, however, drawing upon him the vengeance of Charles V, the Constable de Clisson, ever unmindful of his Breton birth, was sent to ravage his native province, and to complete his reverses Du Guesclin himself arrived before Dinan, and besieged the town he had before gained so much honour in defending. Jean de Montfort, forced to fly, escaped to his ally the King of England.

Charles V. now considering Brittany as a conquered country, resolved to attach it to the crown of France, but the bold and independent Bretons, always remarkable for their devotion to their native soil, rose unanimously, and forgetting the treachery of their Duke, who had introduced English arms amongst them, made a determined stand against the pretensions of France. Jean hurried back from his retreat in England, and putting himself at their head, marched on to repel the invaders, while in his ranks floated the banners of all the contending barons whom a common cause united against a common enemy.

Shortly after these events the great Captain Du Guesclin died at the siege of Chateauneuf Randon.

Dinan suffered much during the struggles between France and Brittany for supremacy, and until the union of the Duchess Anne with the King of France, saw but little cessation of trouble. Again, during the wars of the League, it was the theatre of much contention, since which time it has been allowed to remain in quiet.

Amongst the beautiful legends of Bretagne which M. de Villemarqué has rescued from oblivion, and which deserve to be known not only in France, but in all countries where the true poetry of nature is appreciated, — and where is

it not? — is the following, which I have endeavoured to present to the English reader as nearly in its original shape as possible. M. de Villemarqué, to whom, in his exquisite volumes, I am indebted for so much enjoyment, has given his versions of the Breton dialects in prose, equal to the sweetest verse, but it appears to me that the simplicity of the English language permits an attempt to render them in a metrical form, which, in the present state of the French language, so different from the noble simplicity of its early times, when its poetry resembled our own, would lose all their charm, which consists entirely in the absence of art, and the mere expression of deep feeling and tenderness.

FONTENELLE-LE-LIGUEUR.

THE League had for its motive in Bretagne a sentiment of national independence.

When Louis XII. signed the treaty of union between Bretagne and France, the people, fatigued with a war which had seemed interminable, hailed the rising of a better future, and, forgetting twelve centuries of obstinate resistance, consented, without repugnance, to accept him as their master; but the more clear-sighted did it not without regret.

On the death of the Duchess Anne they secretly plotted the recovery of their independence, under the direction of the Duc de Merkeur, governor of Bretagne, a descendant of the ancient national chiefs, and the League furnished them with a good opportunity. One of the most zealous and most celebrated partisans of the League in Bretagne was the Sieur Fontenelle.

Guy-Eder, a cadet of the house of Beaumanoir, was born in the parish of Botoa, (or de Prat,) in Cornouailles. He had an elder brother, the head of his family, whose conduct was exemplary, and who was greatly annoyed by the extravagant actions of his younger brother, whom he vainly endeavoured to bring to a better sense of his duty, but all in vain, for he had given the reins to the impetuosity of youth, and, following only the course of his own imperious will, was at length conducted to a dreadful death, which he had but too well merited.

At the time he was studying in Paris, at the college of Boncotest, in 1587, he already showed symptoms of his turbulent disposition, being always contending with his companions. In 1589 he sold his books and his scholar's gown, and with the money thus procured he bought a sword and dagger, stole away from college, and took the road to Orleans, to join the army of

the Duc du Maine, then lieutenant-general of the state and crown of France, and chief of the Catholic party; but he had not gone far before he fell into the power of a band of marauders, who despoiled him of everything, so that he was obliged to return to Paris to his first master; but, before long, he joined the partisans of the League, in Bretagne, in 1589, when the whole kingdom was in commotion and uproar.

Guy-Eder, then only fifteen or sixteen years of age, threw himself amongst the populace, then under arms for the Leaguers, who received him with joy, considering him a valuable acquisition, as he was of a noble family, of a high spirit and well-known in the country. It was then that he assumed the title of La Fontenelle (a name belonging to the younger branches of his family), drew together several of his brother's domestics and some young lords of his neighbourhood, whom he knew to be bold and reckless, and whom he induced to join his designs: together they began to pillage and ravage wherever they appeared, without distinction of party; those who could pay their ransom were released, but nothing could be more violent and outrageous than their acts. All the malignants and reprobates of the country flocked to his standard, and his ranks were soon greatly swelled.

He carried his outrages in all directions, even as far as the bishopric of St. Brieuc, Tréguier, and even carried alarm to Guingamp.

He made a sortie in Léon, well accompanied, and, penetrating as far as Mesarnou, he carried off the daughter of the lady of the place, the young Marie de Koadelan, who inherited from her father, Lancelot le Chevoir, and her mother, Renée de Koetlogon, an enormous fortune of nine or ten thousand livres a year: the child at this time, was only eight or nine years of age. He conducted her to a convent at St. Malo, which, at that time, had opened its gates to the Leaguers, though, afterwards, they suspected their governor of a treacherous understanding with the royalists, and, therefore, abandoned the cause.

It appears that Marie de Koadelan became attached to her husband, after her union with him, and her grief for his horrible end caused her death.

FONTENELLE.

DIALECT OF TREGUIER.

Fontanellan a barrez Prad
Bravan map a wiskaz dilad, &c.

Of all the youths that ever threw
A mantle o'er his shoulders wide,
The boldest that broad Cornouailles knew
Was Fontenelle, the flower and pride;
And he has ridden to Mes-ar-nou
To fetch an heiress for his bride.

That little heiress gay and free
Who plays beside her nurse's knee.

"Pretty heiress, tell me, pray,
Why you wander from your bower?"—
"I am in the moat to play,
And I gather ev'ry flower,
Ev'ry flower that grows the best
For my foster brother's breast.
For that gentle brother dear
I have robb'd each summer dell,—
But I dare not linger here
Lest I meet with Fontenelle."—
"Nay now, pretty heiress,—hold,
Know'st thou Fontenelle by sight?"—
"No, but I have heard it told
He is fierce and fell as night;

And I hear my nurses say
That he steals young maids away!
Ay! and more than all the rest,
That he loves an heiress best."

In his arms he takes the child,
With caresses sweet and mild;
Places on the croupe his prize,
And to far St. Malo hies.

In St. Malo's convent long
Dwelt that heiress, free from wrong,
And, her fourteenth summer past,
He has claim'd her hand at last.

PART II.

Loudly peals the castle bell
For to-day is born an heir,
Like his father Fontenelle,
Like his heiress-motherfair.

Tidings are from Paris come,
He must leave his child and home:
"News that brook of no delay
Draw me from thy arms away."

"Fontenelle!—oh! do not go,
Fatal will thy journey be;
If, alas! thou leave me so
Thy return I ne'er shall see.
Send a messenger with speed,
And for gold he shall not need."

"Weep not, dearest, wherefore fear?
I shall soon return with joy;
While I stay be light of cheer,
Tend with care our darling boy."

As he pass'd the gate he said
To the grooms and pages there ;
" Keep your mistress safe from dread,
Guard my infant son with care.
And a banner rich and fine
Shall adorn Our Lady's shrine,
Vestments new bedeck'd with gold
Shall her holy form enfold,
If, returning, Fontenelle
Find his heir and lady well."

PART III.

" King and Queen and nobles gay
Greeting I am come to pay."

" Fontenelle is welcome here,
He shall find no sorry cheer :
We have sought thee long in vain
And thou go'st not hence again !"

" Nay, sir King, my will is free
Or to go or stay with thee !
Bid them saddle straight my steed
Further words it shall not need."

" Hold !—thy castle is too far
And the way is all too long ;
Thou shalt sleep where bolt and bar
Keep my chambers fast and strong ;
Chains my palace can allow
For a friend so true as thou !"

" Go, my page, be sure and fast,
Haste to Koad-e-lan and say,
' Gentle heiress, thou must cast
All thy lace and silk away ;

Silks and lace and jewels all,
Broider'd robes of gems and gold,
For thy husband is in thrall,
And his days are well nigh told.'
Bring a shirt my limbs to fold
And a sheet my corse to hold;
Let the shirt be white to view,
And the sheet of linen new,
And a dish, with gilding chased—
Where my head will soon be placed!
And these ringlets of my hair
To my castle's portal bear.
Put them where the pious few
As they pass to mass may say—
'Virgin Mother! pure and true,
Give the marquis grace to-day!'"

"Take those tresses, part or whole,
But a salver is not meet,
For the traitor's head shall roll
For a plaything in the street!"

The little page, all sorrow, hied,
And when to Koad-e-lan he came,
"Good cheer, fair lady, hail!" he cried:
"Oh, would my master had the same!

"He asks from thee a shirt alone,
His slaughter'd body to enfold,
A sheet to wrap his limbs of stone
A golden dish his head to hold!"

PART IV.

In Paris, men bewilder'd stand,
The people all are crowding fast;
A lady from a distant land,
Rides along the streets in haste.

Koad-e-lan's fair heiress came
In a robe of green so bright—
(Ah! if I the truth should name,
Black would be her robe as night!)

"Sire!" she cried, "for mercy hear!
Give, oh give, my husband back!"—
"Lady, dry the fruitless tear,
He has perish'd on the rack!"

If thou to Koad-e-lan should'st come *
Thy heart with sorrow would o'erflow,
To look on that deserted home,
Where now the tall rank nettles grow.

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* The similarity is striking between this picture drawn by the simple Breton bard and the great poet Byron, when he describes the desolation of the halls of Hassan, beginning,

"The steed is vanish'd from the stall,"

particularly in the lines

"For many a gilded chamber 's there,
Which solitude might well forbear:"

and again

"For Courtesy and Pity died
With Hassan ....
His roof that refuge unto men
Is Desolation's hungry den."

The original, in the dialect of Tréguier, is as follows,

"Neb a zeufé da goadélan
En défé keun ha nec 'hamant
En défé keun braz da wélet
Ann tan maro war ann oaled,
Ha wélet al lenned kreski
E doull ann or hag el leur-zi,
Hag el leur-zi ha kreiz ar zall
Hag ann gwall dud enn eur vragal.
Hag ann dud paour enn eur drémen
O welan, sivoaz, gand anken,

To see no fire upon the hearth,
To hear no sound of joy or mirth:
From floor to floor, from room to room,
All wrapt in misery and gloom;
The seats, the bowers—deserted all,
And green weeds springing in the hall.
The world all bright, and gay, and fair,
But death and desolation there!
While at the gate the poor attend
And bitter tears of anguish shed,
" Alas! our mistress and our friend!
The mother of the poor is dead!"

O welan sivoaz, 'nn eur dremen:
—Chétu maro mamm ar baourien!

thus beautifully rendered into French by M. de Villemarqué.

" Quiconque viendrait à Koadelan aurait le cœur navré, aurait le cœur navré de douleur, à voir le foyer sans feu;

" A voir les orties croître sur le seuil de la porte et au rez de chaussée, dans la maison et dans la salle, et le méchant monde faire le beau!

" Et les pauvres gens pleurer en passant, pleurer avec angoisse, helas! en passant:— voilà qu'elle est morte la mère des pauvres!"

CHAPTER XII.

Dinan. — Duclos. — Old Houses. — Towers. — Pall-Mail.— Town Clock.—Bells.—Ballad of the Baron de Jauioz.— The Bucheron.—Mysterious aid.—Enchanted Wood.—Disappointment.—The Fiend.—Discovery.

HARLES DUCLOS PINOT, the mayor of Dinan, to whom the promenades called " des Grands et Petits Fossés " owe their admirable arrangement, is honoured in his memory by a bust, which is placed in a conspicuous part of them, but with more zeal than taste. The first impression experienced in looking at the ugly pillar surmounted by an ugly head, which occupies the platform of a razed tower, is unmitigated vexation; but when you become aware of the services rendered to his native town by this distinguished man, you are content to wish a little more elegance had directed his grateful *concitoyens* when they erected this monument in the front of the glorious antique walls which look down upon it. They show his house in a

neighbouring street, and have made an opening, probably an improvement, that the elevated bust may form a *point de vue:* all openings in French towns deserve to be commended, as the more fresh air introduced amongst the close and confined streets the better: there are very many of these remaining in Dinan, picturesque in the extreme, and formed expressly for the pencil of Prout, but dark, dirty, and inodorous to such an extent as to be almost impassable.

When we visited the first of these antique towns of France, our impression was to deplore the modern improvements, but we soon found reason to rejoice in such salutary proceedings, and to hail with delight the sight of scaffolds and destruction!

A very few years ago the Place du Champ adjoining the Place Du Guesclin, which is now a well-paved open square, surrounded with good houses, was a horrible marsh, which every Thursday was trodden by immense droves of pigs, who indulged to their heart's content in the mud and filth, of which the place was full; the other part of the Champ was occupied by cattle, and as from week to week it remained as left by them, some idea may be formed of the horror of such a state of things! At length the inhabitants seemed to awake from the lethargy of ages,

which is now the case all over France, as if a geni had suddenly appeared and touched the natives of a slumbering country with his wand, and all this accumulation of disorder and slovenliness was cleared away; a host of black old houses knocked down, and the present airy, extensive and ornamental space procured. Here and there still peep out from amongst the new buildings an antique front and peaked roof, but all is cleanly white-washed and repaired, and adds to the adornment of the square.

The former prison of the town was in the towers of the Porte de Brest, than which a more damp, dirty, loathsome-looking corner can hardly be conceived, yet here the wretched culprits were confined; many of the lower rooms must have always been in a flooded condition, and all sorts of bad air was for ever breathing round the blackened walls. At this moment, an enormous dirty pool, probably the remains of the moat, bathes the foot of one of these hideous towers. It is to be expected that attention will be paid to this part of the town, and the nuisance removed. It appears that shortly after the prisoners had been taken to the Tour St. Louis, where the prison now is, a great part of the northern tower of Brest fell, and it was then proposed that both should be destroyed to pre-

vent further accidents: however, it was found easier to talk of doing so, than accomplishing a feat which English and French armies had in vain attempted for ages; and, instead of persevering in the design, the proud old fortress was patched up and made safe; a circumstance, with all one's attachment to antiquity, scarcely to be rejoiced at, as the inhabitants have lost an accession of fresh air and light by the preservation of a defence which they have somewhat less need of now than when Edward and Clisson were thundering at their gates. The antique effect is also totally destroyed, by two extinguisher-shaped roofs which modern taste has added. Another of the gates, La Porte St. Malo, is a heavy pile of building, with fortifications partly modern, and little less dirty than its brother of Brest.

There are several fine public establishments in Dinan: one of the most conspicuous is the Seminaire, formerly the Communauté des Cordéliers, founded in 1240 by Henri d'Avaugour, in the church of which formerly were seen the tombs of the founder, and those of several Dukes of Brittany. A manufactory of sail-cloth now exists, conducted by means of steam, where was once the community of the Ursulines de St. Charles.

In a part of what was the Grands Fossés, is now the Pall Mail, a promenade adorned with acacias, which form a charming shady retreat, extending for a considerable distance from the venerable tower of St. Julien; all the fine towers and walls which crown the ramparts are objects of deep and admiring interest, it is only against the blackened, dirty, and useless piles confining the entrance of these antique cities, that the lover of health and cleanliness must wage war, and without a sigh of remorse see levelled with the ground.

A remarkable feature amongst the monuments of Dinan, is the great granite tower which supports the enormous clock given to the town by the Duchess Anne, in 1507. The sittings of the magistrates were formerly held here, but the dampness of the chambers has caused them to be abandoned. The clock is said to be the first ever introduced in Bretagne; its bell bears the following inscription:

Anne, pour vray je fus nommée
En l'an mil cinq cent et sept,
Des nobles de la ville noumée
Tierce de ce pays en effet.
Je fus en cetuy an fondue
Au moys d'août par Philipes Bufet
Et de bon mestal bien randue
Du poys de six mil et sept.

This find old bell sends forth its deep hollow voice, and is heard in every part of the town, recalling the memory of the beloved Duchess Anne, and her "blanches hermines," and a thousand old stories of the middle ages.

A characteristic feature of the Bretons is the extreme attachment of the peasants to their bells. M. de Villemarqué, who is intimately acquainted with his countrymen, has described them as carrying this affection to a romantic extreme. He remarks, "Our bells! we look upon them as sisters, as eternal friends, who never abandon us, who sing to us in our cradles, who join in all our joys and amusements, who sympathise in our misfortunes, who celebrate our triumphs, who lament over our wrongs, who mourn over the tombs of our warriors.

"The naming of a bell is an important event in a parish. A fête is given in its honour, dancing, singing, and every demonstration of mirth attends it.

"During the Revolution, when the bells were taken to be melted, in order to convert the metal into cannon, the consternation was general; nothing was to be seen but women and children prostrate at the foot of the bells, disputing the passage of the soldiers, and entreating for mercy, as if it were the lives of the inha-

bitants they were taking, and the greatest of all misfortunes had fallen on the country."

The ballad which follows, translated from M. de Villemarqué's delightful work, contains allusions to this passion. The unfortunate peasant-girl, when torn away from her family and her home, is only overcome with grief, when she hears her village bells for the last time.

This is one of the many sad ballads of Bretagne which I have already named. There is much in their style to remind the reader of the pathetic Scottish legends, which have so often beguiled us of our tears.

The hero is Louis Baron de Jauioz in Languedoc, who was the son of Randon the 1st. and Flora de Kailus. His name belongs to the history of the fourteenth century, and is mixed up with the principal events at the end of this important period.

He followed the Duke de Berry, his suzerain, into Bretagne, whom Charles V. had sent, with Bertrand Du Guesclin and the Dukes of Burgundy and Bourbon, to fight against the English (1378). He also distinguished himself in Flanders, taking part in all the victories of the united armies of the King of France and Jean de Bretagne. His name is recorded at Ypres, at Cassel, at Gravelines, and at the siege of Bourbourg.

Some years afterwards he made his will at Aigues Mortes and embarked for the Holy Land.

According to tradition, during his sojourn in Bretagne, he bought for gold a young girl from that country, and carried her into France, where she died of grief.

THE BARON DE JAUIOZ.

A LEGEND OF CORNOUAILLE.

Pé oann d'ar ster gant va dilad
Mé glévé 'nn ein-glot huanat, &c.
Barzas-Breiz.

"I stood beside the running stream
And heard the mournful death-bird† say,
'Tina — know'st thou, 'tis no dream,
Thou art bought and sold to-day?'

"Mother, mother, is it true,
What the death-bird said he knew?
Am I, for the love of gold,
To the aged Baron sold?"

---

* Edited by M. de Villemarqué.

† The death-bird is a little grey bird, which is heard in winter in the Landes: its note is sweet and mournful.

" Ah ! dear child, I cannot tell ;
Ask thy father for the truth."
" Father — is it fixed to sell
To old age thy daughter's youth ? "

" Daughter — urge me not, I pray,
Ask thy brother — he can say."
" Lannik ! — brother ! — speak the word,
Am I sold to Jauioz's lord ? "

" Sister, thou art sold. — Be wise,
For thy price was brought to-day,
Let no tears bedim thine eyes,
Let thy gear be brave and gay.
Fifty crowns of silver white,
Fifty more of gold so bright,
Jauioz's lord for thee has paid,
Be thy fortune marr'd or made ! "

" Mother, shall thy child be drest
In the white robe, or the red ?
Which would suit a bride the best ?
Or will black be well instead ; —
That my sister Helen sew'd ? "
" Daughter ask me not. The road
Will be rough, and dark the way,
Dress thee quickly, for thy steed,
Yon black courser, trapp'd so gay,
Waits to bear thee hence with speed."

PART II.

'Twas not far she rode when loud
On the air come sounds she knew ;
'Twas the bells that rang so proud,
Then she wept : " St. Anne, adieu !

All my native bells farewell!
Ye have toll'd my funeral knell!"

By the Lake of Pain* she pass'd:
There she saw a ghastly band;
White their garments, and the blast
Drove their shadowy barks to land.

Crowds of spectres were the crew,
Souls who seek in vain for rest;
Hard her struggling breath she drew,
And her head sunk on her breast.

When the Vale of Blood she near'd,
All that ghastly band, with speed,
Following in pursuit appeared,
Close behind her coal-black steed!†
Hideous forms and sights of fear,
Press her nearer and more near.

All her senses chill'd with woe,
Full of horror and dismay,
Motionless and pale as snow,
At the Baron's gate she lay.

PART III.

"Wake thee, Tina, 'tis thy lord,
Seat thee by the blazing hearth,
See, they spread the festal board,
Hark the minstrels and the mirth!"

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* It was supposed that France was divided from Bretagne by a lake which was called *Lac de L'Angoisse* and by a valley called *Vallée du Sang*. This fiction is probably intended by the poet to convey the idea of the wretchedness attending a banishment to a *foreign* land, for such was France looked upon by the Bretons.

† This is not the only ballad in which the similarity to Lenore is remarkable.

By the fire the Baron stands,
Black his raven locks as night,
Eyes that glow like flaming brands,
Hair and beard all hoary white.

"Long I've sought this blooming maid,
She is mine, at last!" he said.
"Come, fair girl, and view my store,
Count my riches o'er and o'er,
Come with me from room to room."—
"Baron Jauioz, take me home!
Rather, by my mother's side,
Counting billets for our fire,
Would I all my life abide;
And no riches I desire."—
"See, my caves are filled with wine,
Drink—'tis sweet, a cure for care."—
"Brighter does the streamlet shine
Where my father's flocks repair!"—
"Come and choose throughout the town
Broider'd robes* all rich and grand."—
"Better is a woollen gown
Made me by my mother's hand."—
"Come, behold this cincture bright
Dazzling all whene'er you move."—
"Better is the girdle white
Which my sister Helen wove!"

"Girl! thy words are harsh and cold,
Hatred in each look is told!

---

* Among the temptations offered by the aged baron to poor Tina, is the embroidered robe, called in the original *paurisk*. This dress, worn by the ladies of the thirteenth century, and probably that which followed, but was not in use in the fifteenth, was a kind of mantle. The date of the ballad is, therefore, easily decided from this circumstance.

Curses on my gold that bought thee!
Curses on my heart that sought thee!
Idiot that I was—my gain
Is but tears, reproach and pain."

PART IV.

"Little birds that roam so free
Hear my voice, and list to me.
You can to my village hie,
I, alas! am captive here,
I am sunk in misery,
You are full of joyous cheer.
To my village when ye rove
All my friends your eyes may view,
To my mother bear my love,
To my father bear it too.
Bless my mother day by day,
To our priest my greetings tell,
To my brother whisp'ring say
I have pardon'd him—farewell!"

PART V.

Months were gone: 'twas midnight deep,
All was hush'd in silent sleep;
Not a footstep press'd the floor,
Nothing stirr'd, above, around,—
When a soft voice at the door
Murmur'd words of mournful sound:

"Father—mother—wake and pray—
And your mourning weeds prepare,
For my soul a requiem say,
Comfort me with many a prayer,
Heave the sigh and shed the tear,
For your child lies on her bier."

I know not at what period the event took place, which is here repeated from a tradition still current at Dinan, though rather less miraculous than most of the tales handed down by the Bretons, and less melancholy than the foregoing.

A certain farmer in the neighbourhood of Dinan had agreed to cut down a wood close to his farm; as he was in want of money, he had concluded the bargain at a very low rate: the trees were of large size, and in spite of all his efforts he found that his work advanced very slowly. The harvest had been bad, his family was large, and he reflected with uneasiness on the expectations he had founded on the money he was to receive, with which he destined to pay his rent. Every evening Laurent calculated with increased vexation the trees already cut down, and became aware of the almost impossibility of finishing his job by the given time.

One morning, arriving at a very early hour in the wood, he was amazed to discover that there were more trees on the ground than he had counted the previous night; and yet he felt certain that he had been correct. This singular circumstance renewed his disquiet, as he could in no way account for the fact; never-

theless, he continued his labours, taking care to invoke the assistance of all the saints in Paradise, as certain extraordinary suspicions passed through his mind. On his return home at night, Laurent marked down without delay the number of trees already felled, and how many remained.

The next day the farmer was about to commence operations on an enormous oak, which he had calculated would take him the greatest part of the morning to cut down, when he beheld it lying prostrate, and beside it several smaller ones, all felled with the first-rate dexterity of woodcraft. Instead of feeling gratitude to Heaven for this interposition in his favour, the unfortunate man was seized with a trembling conviction that his mysterious assistant was no other than the author of evil himself! What a change came over his mind immediately! he had hoped and wished and sighed to see his task advance: he thought of nothing else, he spoke of nothing else; it was the sole object of all his aspirations; and yet, now that he saw himself near attaining the goal, his spirits sunk, terror took possession of him, and he would have given worlds to see the gigantic trees once again in their legitimate places, and his axe hewing away at their resisting roots.

As the farmer pondered on the wondrous aid he had received, he became convinced that he was the prey of enchantment; filled with this idea, he rushed wildly home to his wife and family and communicated to them his fears and conjectures. After some consultation, it was resolved that the most effectual plan was to relate all to the *curé*, who listened with much attention and awe to the relation of the farmer, and accompanied with all the requisites hastened to the enchanted wood. There, in all due form, he exorcised the malignant spirit and all his adherents; forbidding them to continue their vagaries, and commanding the trees to remain firm and resist all attacks, except those made by a legitimate woodman. After this ceremony the good priest retired, thoroughly convinced of the efficacy of his formula and the extent of his power, leaving Laurent in a tranquillized state, his family satisfied, the crowd appeased, and all in a happy frame of mind, not, however, forgetting to count the fallen trees, and those which were still untouched.

On the following day, whether guided by curiosity or in order to enjoy the triumph which their *curé* had obtained over the spirits of darkness, three fourths of the parish hastened to the wood and were soon joined by the reverend father

himself; but, strange to relate! on the ground lay extended as many newly-felled trees as on any night preceding!

Excitement was now at its height,—terror and uncertainty prevailed,—the obstinate fiends had carried the day,—the priest was despised by them, and to what might not their audacity lead! In this state of things the mayor of Dinan roused himself and took the resolution of visiting the spot in person: accordingly, all the authorities, who had courage to dare the adventure of the *Bois Perilleux*, prepared to accompany the magistrate, in whose mind it appears lurked some latent sparks of disbelief, which while they shocked some might have encouraged others.

The moon rose splendidly and showed every object clearly; meadows and rivulets and rocks and gardens all shone out in the brilliant light when the procession took its way from the "tower'd city," and marched directly for the place given up to evil dominion: it waited not long—hardly had the deep sound of the great bell of Dinan rung twelve upon the air when a figure was seen advancing rapidly, in garments white and glimmering in the moonlight, an axe flashing on his shoulder, and a pair of eyes fixed with unearthly intentness on the objects before him. He rushed forward, while the

timid crowd drew back breathless with alarm, and commenced a furious attack upon a very large oak; his strokes were rapid and incessant, and every one told: one, two, three trees fell before him; his movements were like those of a machine, so regular, so forcible, and so well directed. Stupified with amazement the dignitaries and their townsmen looked on,—

> Every hair of their heads was standing upright,
> And their limbs like a palsy shook with affright!

The "lubber fiend," for such he appeared, at length discontinued his toil, and, shouldering his axe, seemed about to depart: to depart! where would he go? from whence had he come? perhaps he would traverse the country desolating all he approached: perhaps his axe would be employed on "other groves and other scenes among." Where was Saint Suliac? where all the saints? the Dinannais was abandoned to the power of the foul fiend! Suddenly a peal of laughter and a loud cry echoed through the wood; the fiend stopped, his axe dropped from his grasp, his knees shook, he rubbed his eyes, turned towards them, and the moonbeams falling full upon him, they recognised the farmer Laurent himself, and saw the mayor shaking him by the hand, and indulging in a shout of hilarity

which was soon joined by all the company, and by the object of it himself when he discovered that the constant anxiety which preyed upon his waking thoughts had so wrought on him in sleep, that he had risen every night and continued the work which his wish had been unable to accomplish in the daytime.

CHAPTER XIII.

Dinan. — The Well. — The Fairies and the Infant. — The Charge.—The Enchanted Fountain.—The Ladies.—The offended Fairy.—The quarrel.—The rescue.—The Adventure concluded.—Lehon.—The Abbey.—English House.—Views. — Canal. —Jehan de Beaumanoir. —The Vassal.—Rosa-lys.—The Murder.—The Champ Clos.

INAN'S chief attraction to families who make it their abode, is the advantage it presents in its fine mineral springs, whose efficacy is very great, and even if they were less so would be much frequented, for nothing can exceed the charming situation of the well, and the delightful walks which conduct to it. An uninterrupted alley of lime-trees begins at a short distance from the town, and continuing for more than half a league, leads to the entrance of the mysterious valley. You descend from platform to platform by neat paths, carefully planted with rose-trees and larches, and drive down lower and lower amongst thicker

and thicker foliage till you find yourself on a broad flat at the bottom of the steep ravine you have left. This subterrene terrace is nicely gravelled, and the fine grove which adorns it is not too close to prevent its being perfectly free from damp. A picturesque mill, turned by a rushing stream, forms a very ornamental feature; the covered well is close by; an orchestra, a salon, and seats under the trees, announce the customary amusements which take place here. Fêtes are given; dancers and gaiety, music and song, make the valley re-echo; 'whispering lovers'—lively friends, or quiet invalids, all find *leur affaire* in this secluded retreat at different hours of the summer day; or mere wanderers seeking only novelty, as we were, may be equally delighted by a most agreeable walk. One cannot feel surprised to see how many of our countrymen have established themselves with their families at Dinan, when one observes such attractions at every turn, and when to all the *agrémens* is added the fact of cheap living,—house-rent, &c., being very reasonable. Almost all the best houses in and out of the town belong to the English; there is lively and pleasant society, and civility amongst the townspeople.

Brittany is famous for its *fountains*. There is no end to the traditions respecting them all

over the country: "La Fontaine Merveilleuse," properly so called, where so many wonderful scenes passed in the mysterious times of Arthur and his knights, is supposed to exist in the forest of Broceliande;* that forest which, to identify at the present day, has cost so much labour and pains to the poets, antiquaries, and historians of France! That forest sacred to Merlin and the fairy Viviana, and a host of fairies beside, who filled it with wonders, and provided adventures for the chivalry of ages. The mystery of mineral springs has always been a fertile source of superstition. Even in our own country, at least in Wales, the miraculous powers of holy wells are still believed, not only by the peasantry, but by persons more enlightened; we cannot, therefore, feel astonished at the speculations to which they gave rise in times of less research; we can scarcely contemplate the wonders of Nature without awful surprise, even though all the laws and secret causes of apparent wonders have been revealed, and we must sympathize with our ancestors when they attributed all to superhuman interference. The following fragment is extracted from M. du Taya's pamphlet.

* Or Painpont; see the charming work of M. Baron du Taya on the subject. "Opuscules Bretoni."

THE FAIRIES AND THE INFANT.

(How Butor of the Mountain left his child to the care of his knights to be carried to the Fountain.)

The infant being born was carefully wrapt in an embroidered mantle of silk and gold. The evening having arrived, Butor summoned all his knights around him, and thus addressed them: "For the love of God, you who are my true knights, listen to me: you see this new-born child, brought into the world with care and trouble; to you I consign it, for it must this night be carried to Brociliande, and placed beside the fountain, where I charge you to watch well."

Then Bruiant rose and said, "Sire, I have done homage to you for all my possessions, let me be cut in pieces as small as mincemeat, or I beseech you to have me hung up instantly if I bring you not back your son, unharmed."

"I verily believe," said Butor, "that the child is dear to you, such words could not come from a heart devoid of friendship."

Then all the knights took an oath to guard the infant, and to remain as near the fountain as possible without disturbing the fairies, who were to predict his destiny, and each wished

that, should he fail in his duty, he might be hung up higher than ever bird flew.

The heart of the father was content when he heard this: "never," said they, "will we return to the castle, until your son has been placed by the fountain in the wood."

Then fifty sergeants-at-arms were called forth, and thirty bold knights who had distinguished themselves in combat: their swords were bright and keen, and more lucid than the clearest water or mirror.

When the knights and squires were all in order, they mounted their horses, and one by one slowly rode out of the castle gate. Then Butor advanced towards them. "By the God of Power!" said he, "I charge you to preserve that which is more precious to me than life; you know that my wife is in great fear and sorrow, but if it please Heaven she shall have the greater joy."

Then Butor re-entered the castle, sighing deeply.

The lady wrung her hands: her lord comforted her all in his power. He then took the babe, well covered to guard against the night damp. He gave it into the arms of the knight Bruiant, and begged them, for dear love, not to go by more than four to the place where

the fairies resort, and they promised to obey him.

Bruiant and his three companions straightway entered the forest, and the rest remained without, guarding the passage. The knights followed a little path where the grass grew thick, and further and further they went into the wood, till at last, amongst the waving boughs of the green trees, they perceived the fountain. The destined moment was now come. The three knights dismounted in order to assist him who held the infant. Carefully and tenderly they took it, without harming it in the least. They set the babe beneath a chestnut-tree, and put under its head a soft pillow. The beauty of the child spread a light throughout the forest; its little cheeks were the colour of roses. When Bruiant looked at the lovely creature, he cried out, "Oh, holy Queen of Heaven! to whom all my thoughts incline, grant that this night may be so propitious to this child, that there may be none of his lineage who shall not be honoured in him in times to come. See his rosy colour—remark his soft breathing—sweeter than the odour of the flowers of hawthorn; shame would it be that a child so lovely, and which belongs to thee by its perfect beauty, should meet with mischance."

Then he said to the other knights, "Let us now, brave knights and companions, retire to a distance, and watch what happens. If we should lose this infant, we have lost our lives; but if we bring him back safely to Butor, our lord, great will be our gain and joy."

They all mounted their coursers, and, turning from the child, hurried off as quick as they could into the wood, conscious that they had left behind them a jewel which no gold could buy, *richer than any legate, prelate, archbishop, or cardinal could possess.* The poet here exclaims,

> The child beside the fount was laid
> In silv'ry jets its waters play'd,
> Dashing upon its gravelly bed
> Like sparkles from a diamond shed.
> Bright em'rald grass all round it lay
> A thousand flow'rs peep'd through the spray,
> And blush'd amid the murmuring wave
> That freshness to their beauties gave.
> No music's tone so soft as this,
> And scarce so sweet a maiden's kiss!

Sad and fearful stood the knights concealed amongst the trees, each felt that the infant was in great peril. They prayed fervently to our blessed Lady for aid, when suddenly they heard the sweet tone of a woman singing, as though the angels of Paradise had come into the place.

When one female voice had ceased, a second took up the song, and then a third continued:

"Hand in hand they came with glee,
Singing gaily all the way,
Tow'rds the fountain, round the tree
Where the precious infant lay."

The poet here describes the good qualities, virtues, and excellent intentions of these ladies, in a tone which breathes something of fear in its propitiatory flattery, as it is generally acknowledged, even by the fairies' historians, that their characters were not quite understood, nor whether their acts would be for good or evil; the nervous alarms of the father and his bold knights is a somewhat clear proof of the uncertainty under which they laboured. Be this as it may, the concealed knights saw with pleasure that the ladies approached the object of so much solicitude in a friendly mood; they recognised them instantly to be the fairies by their wonderful beauty, their splendid attire, and the sparkling crowns of gold upon their heads. If a man had wandered for *two thousand* days in search of equal charms, he would have failed to discover them. At the sight of them the knights lost every recollection but the extraordinary splendour and loveliness of their appearance.

Meanwhile, the ladies had perceived the infant. "Heaven preserve me!" * cried the first, who had a haughty and majestic mien; "here is a new born child!"

"Sovereign lady!" exclaimed the second, "let me speak first, and give him a gift. May he have courtesy and strength, and may his name be heart to the borders of the Seine. I give him beauty and learning; I am resolved that it shall be said he was born in a lucky hour; he shall be feared in war and in the tourney; he shall be honoured for his prowess, for I am sure he is of good lineage. Ladies, be good to him, I pray, though our gifts are but little in comparison to what God can and will do for him."

The first fairy did not appear quite pleased, and said that her will was that he should be unsuccessful in love, and experience all the pains and torments of unrequited affections. The third fairy then spoke with some sharpness, "I will," said she, "in that case, give him all the aid I can, and in every trouble and danger, I will do all my endeavour to be of use to him."

* Rather a singular expression for a fairy: "Dieu me soit en aide!" but these appear remarkably pious spirits — otherwise, of course, Christian knights would have had no concern with them.

The chief lady answered with a disdainful look and proceeded to ridicule the power of the other fairies. "Whoever marries this varlet," said she scornfully, "will have a hideous humpback for a husband!"

"Are you mad, lady?" exclaimed the third; "have pity on him: are you doting! such a creature as he is! we shall cease to love you if you act with this caprice! For my own part, I will take care that he is the most lovely of his sex; do what you please, I have told you my mind."

The fairies now all began to quarrel, and the knights listened in the greatest agitation, when the little child looked up with a tender glance and so sweetly did he regard them that they all with one accord declared he was the most charming child that ever was born, and began to play with him and laugh and kiss him in the fondest manner. They then took him up, and the third put on his little finger a ring enamelled with fine gold, and gave him four kisses, and took leave of him, tenderly weeping. "Lady," said the mistress, "he has enchanted you: what love there is between you!"

"True," said the third fairy, "and though I have given him but a little gift to-day, he shall have better in time to come. But we must go;

we have already tarried too long. It is near the time of cock-crow."

> Then she who loved the little babe the best
> Turned on his gentle face her glances bright,
> While sighs were heaving in her tender breast,
> And long she look'd until she vanished quite.

Before, however, they all withdrew, each had left their gift, that of the mistress was *very heavy (moult pesant)*. They laid the child again under the chestnut tree and were seen no more.

Then the knights started forth from the wood. "For the love of Heaven, hasten!" they cried; "the cock will crow in a moment, and should a wild beast come he might be killed before we could prevent it. Let us take up the dear infant whom we so much love." They pressed forward, fearful to the last moment lest any harm should befal him: they caught him in their arms and were directly in their saddles. They then proceeded gently on their road because the little babe was asleep, and Bruiant laid him softly before him. Thus finished the adventure of the Forest of Bersillant.* Happy were the knights without, when they saw them returning with the rescued treasure, and they sounded their horns of gold and ivory so loud that every part of the forest

* Or Broceliande.

resounded with their joys that the son of their Lord Butor, whom he had confided to their care, was restored safe.

Lehon is a village about half a league from Dinan, celebrated for the ruins of its abbey and castle, and for the extraordinary beauty of the scenery which surrounds it, which yields to none in any part of this enchanting country. Situated on the banks of the Rance, its irregular streets leading up and down amongst rugged stones and broken walls, the bourg itself has nothing to recommend it, but its pretty antique bridge attracts the eye by its venerable appearance, telling of the struggles which it has endured when one of its arches was cut away by the contending armies, which besieged its castle and destroyed its monastery. That monastic pile, now open to the elements, presents a splendid mass of ruins; the only part remaining at all entire is the chapel, where formerly reposed the tombs of the Lords of Beaumanoir, and which now encloses all that is left of them; these remains are, however, very precious, and deserve particular attention. But for the antiquarian care of an Englishman, a Mr. Allen, as we were informed, the fine effigies which are the treasures of this chapel, would have been left to destruction. Distressed at seeing the deso-

lation in which the ruins lay, he gave a small sum of money, persuaded an old woman to take charge of the ruin, put a lock upon the door, and clean out the chapel. There is now, therefore, no fear of the stones being removed, or of this beautiful specimen of early architecture receiving further injury. There are five of these figures lying on slabs of granite. One is said to be Jehan de Beaumanoir, son of the hero of the famous Battle of Thirty,* in full armour; another, also in armour, but of much smaller proportions, with delicate feet and small hands, is his liege lady, who accompanied him in many of his expeditions. One is a prior of the Abbey,

* The famous Battle of the Thirty was fought on the 27th March 1350. The parties met at a tree called the Half Way Oak, from its position between Ploermel and Château Josselin, the fortress of Beaumanoir. Thirty appeared on each side; the French consisted of nine knights and twenty one squires, all Bretons: while the number of combatants on the part of England was made up by the addition of four Bretons, and six Germans or Flemings, only twenty native Englishmen being found in Ploermel.† The combat seems to have been little less bloody and quite as horrible as that between the Clan Chattan and their opposed rivals, described with such fearful reality by Sir W. Scott: the German allies were probably as fond of fighting as the smith. The Bretons were the victors on this memorable occasion, and the English prisoners were carried to Beaumanoir's Château de Josselin.

† Grande Chronique de St. Denis.

a relative of the lord, and the other two are uncertain, but probably belong to the same family and period. The vaulted roof of the chapel is preserved, the pillars are delicate and light, and the groinings very perfect.

Of this once magnificent abbey the effect of the few remaining walls and windows is very fine. They appear from many points of view along the beautiful shores of the Rance, and form exquisite objects from the surrounding hills. Everywhere they are subjects for the painter; and artists are frequently met with seated in the most attractive spots, busily engaged in transferring the magnificent scenery to their sketch-books. The exquisite bits discoverable at each turn might seduce an amateur of the sublime and beautiful to linger all day on this delicious shore, before him the ruins, amidst the most graceful and varied foliage, the gardens and meadows reaching to the water's brink, the bridge with its back-ground of mountains in the distance, the little sails gliding along, the small islands, the gigantic hills clothed with wood, from whence are seen, from distance to distance, the ivy-crowned turrets of the castle of Beaumanoir; the huge blocks of grey granite scattered along the way, and the winding stream at their feet, with emerald grass and waving reeds

close to the margin:—all this may well seduce a painter, or a wanderer to spend all the shining summer day leaning on the short turf between the rocks, under the shelter of the groves at Lehon, as we did, and, regardless of fatigue, to climb the steep hill which, almost perpendicular, is cut into paths that serpentine sufficiently to suffer the passage, not only of the peasants, but of the dwellers who inhabit a charming villa, placed exactly on the peak of this elevation. It need hardly be said that these adventurous mountaineers are English, and delightfully they are repaid for the trouble of mounting so high.

We met some of the party on donkeys, and were thus convinced that the ascent was not impracticable. Nearly at the top we were guided by a man who carried a huge pitcher, and who was panting up the steep to a spring which gushed from the rock and formed a little basin of the clearest crystal. It seemed hard to have so far to mount to fetch water, but we saw it was so good that it was worth the trouble. The walks, or rather scrambles, we took from this part, pausing to enjoy the views which every now and then burst upon us, were such, perhaps, as few have often ventured upon, for they were perilous enough, but we gained our point, and managed to see Dinan and its crowning towers

in a great variety of positions, at different heights and under different aspects of light and shade. Though it is difficult to pronounce positively as to which of the environs of Dinan is to be preferred where all have such claims to admiration, I am inclined to give the palm to Lehon. The canal *de l'Isle et Rance* joins the Vilaine to the Rance, just above the bourg, and is destined to afford communication between the ports of Redon and St. Malo: at present it is principally useful to convey wood and other articles into the interior.

The church of Lehon has preserved some painted glass in its windows, the rest has been modernized, and is used as a parish church. The doorways of the ruined abbey are extremely fine, but not of very easy approach, being surrounded by slovenly cottages, and the ground near them much encumbered with rubbish. This building, which must have been one of the finest works of the period, was called the Royal Priory of St. Magloire, and founded in 850 by Nominoë, King of Bretagne.

The castle was besieged and taken by Henry II. of England, in 1168, demolished in consequence of a compact between Henry and Louis le Jeune, rebuilt in 1402, and again destroyed. There was a well in the centre of the castle,

remarkable for its depth and size: it was filled up at the last demolition.

The story of the Lord of Beaumanoir, whose effigy is seen on the tumulary stone in the abbey chapel, has something in it worthy of memory. It is told by an old chronicler in the following manner. The date of the chronicle is 1410.

Messire Jehan de Beaumanoir was called from this life to the next in the year 1384. He was the son of the hero of the Combat of Thirty, the celebrated Maréchal of Bretagne, who defeated the English so often. A companion of Du Guesclin, who espoused his niece Tiphaine, he distinguished himself in Normandy, Poitou, and Spain, where, though exposed to great dangers, he was spared to be the victim of treachery and hatred at home, close to his own castle. The reason of his death is differently given, though in the manner of it all agree. The most respectable part of the community of Dinan, of his own time, gave no credit to the tales which were circulated; others, lovers of the romantic and mysterious, inclined to believe them, and to interpret the knight's holding his hand on his breast, not an unusual attitude on tombs, to another cause than his being engaged in prayer. It has been imagined that he holds a rose

pressed to his breast in memory of the fair cause of his fatal end: though this supposition we do not like to encourage, as it destroys the romantic interest which attaches to the armed female with the delicate feet, who is called his wife, and who ought not to have met from her own knight an ungrateful return for her attachment. Be that as it may — thus it is written, in the quaint history alluded to, whose style I do not attempt to imitate.

Great consternation reigned in Dinan when it was known that the vassal Rolland had murdered the sire de Beaumanoir, with his hatchet. Rolland Moysan was a farmer belonging to the estate of that renowned knight, and was attached to his family by long service, but he was induced to this act by the representations of a bitter enemy of Jehan, Pierre Tournemine, who, for some cause of quarrel, had sworn never to make peace with him, and to work his downfall by any means in his power. For this purpose he disguised a creature of his own as a vassal of Robert, the brother of Jehan, and sent him on a feigned message to Beaumanoir, desiring to see him at a certain place, to confer about certain lands, for which an offer had been made to Robert, who wished for his brother's sanction to his disposing of them. This he did in order that the

suspicion of the murder should fall upon Robert, but in this he failed, as such an unnatural act was never imagined to have stained the name of that gallant knight.

Not far from the castle, at the foot of one of the high granite rocks which border the stream of the Rance, was the cottage of Rolland Moysan; that cottage was the best kept, the neatest and the prettiest near the bourg of Lehon; and in the garden, which was full of flowers, might often be seen the beautiful daughter of the farmer, tending them, "herself a fairer flower." It so happened that the Sire de Beaumanoir in his rambles had seen the pretty Rosa-lys, and, attracted by her innocence and beauty, had more than once stopped to gaze upon her, while she unconsciously pursued her occupation.

The admiration of a great lord was not likely to remain long a secret to its object; the vanity of Rosa-lys was flattered at first, and affection began insensibly to take part in the emotion she felt when addressed in tender language by her liege lord, from whose lips she had no right to expect any words but those of protection and condescension. How long their interviews continued is uncertain, or whether her knightly lover gained from her an avowal of her regard, but the roses were frequently transferred from

the garden to the bosom of Beaumanoir; and, on the fatal evening of their last meeting, he is said to have placed a fresh wreath in his breast, which was not gathered in the gardens of his own castle. He was pursuing his way, deeply meditating on the evanescence of happiness, and the crosses and disappointments of life, and apparently regardless of all around him; his destination was towards the place, not far distant, where he expected to meet his brother. He was unarmed, for he felt secure in the midst of his own people, and unconscious of the vicinity of foes; when, suddenly, from a thicket, the traitor, Rolland, darted upon him, and, before he was aware of the attack, with two strokes of his hatchet clove his head in two.

It was reported that the father had more than once secretly witnessed the meetings of the lovers; and, urged by the representations and taunts of the vindictive Tournemine, had resolved on this occasion to waylay his lord, and sacrifice him to his vengeance and the hatred of his enemy.

When news was brought to Robert de Beaumanoir of this tragedy, great was his grief and that of all his household: the body of the unfortunate knight was taken to the abbey chapel, and received with all the ceremonies of the

church. A skilful statuary was sent for to execute a statue befitting the tomb of so noble a personage. According to the laws of chivalry, his feet should rest upon a lion, which was done, for bold as a lion had he ever been; therefore he was represented in his full armour, except the head, which was covered with a death-cloth; for he had been struck on the head by the hand of a murderer, and not by that of a warrior. Robert also commanded that his right hand should be placed upon his heart in memory of his piteous adventure, but the idle say, *in memory of his love.*

The murderer, Rolland, was put to a cruel but deserved death;* and having seen all honours paid to his brother's remains, Robert de Beaumanoir set out for Vannes, where he supplicated the good Duke of Bretagne to grant him permission to engage in *champ clos* the traitor Tournemine. This was permitted, and on the 20th December, 1386, the famous combat was fought between them at Nantes on the Place du Bouffay, when Robert de Beaumanoir revenged his brother's murder on the villain who had caused his death, being victorious in the fight, to the great satisfaction of all who witnessed it.

* Rolland Moysan was executed in the Place du Champ, at Dinan.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Château de la Garaye.—The Savage.—The Ruins.—The Lamb.—The Châtelain.—Country Life.—The Charge.—Poor employed.—Establishments.—St. Esprit.—Les Incurables.—Ruined Village.—The desolate Cross.—Primitive Threshing-floors.

WITHIN a walk of Dinan, through a series of pretty lanes, is the Château de la Garaye, or rather the ruins of a fine mansion of the period of Francis I. Its walls and one tower alone exist, the rest has been taken down or destroyed by the weather; blocks of stone lie about in confused masses amongst the grass and weeds that encumber the ruin, a farmhouse is built upon the foundation, and a slovenly garden, left to neglect, surrounds it. A very long broad walk conducts to the entrance, which once, of course, was ornamented with several rows of fine trees now no more in existence. Blocks of fine white marble, some capitals and broken

columns are scattered about; the desolation is, in fact, complete, and, except on a bright summer's day, such as it was when we saw it, the whole scene must, from its low situation, be damp and dismal enough. The farm appears, however, to be a substantial one, with extensive outhouses attached, and we observed a good many workmen employed, principally in threshing corn; yet the proprietor can be content to live in the midst of such discomfort as winter weather and rains must bring him every year, although by clearing away some of the rubbish around, he could render his ruins ornamental, and induce visitors to come whose contributions would repay any trouble he might take: but, as this is not the case, you must scramble along as well as you can to get to the pretty tower, whose sculptured front and beautifully carved ornaments prove how worthy of admiration the building once was.

We were contemplating this, when a wild-looking figure of a man suddenly appeared before us, and in a jargon which I supposed to be Breton, offered to guide us where we could have a better view: though we did not much admire his manner nor his looks, we felt almost afraid to refuse, and followed him as he stalked gloomily before us across a little deso-

late ruined bridge into a more miserable-looking court than we had seen before — it seemed the interior of one of the rooms by the remains of a fire-place, and the size of the ivy-covered walls: through rank grass and weeds we waded on, when, with a half-savage grin and bound, the guide reached a pile of broken stones and invited us to ascend. I was weak enough to give him my hand to mount to where he pointed, exclaiming "*Bieaux ici!*" but found, when I had gained the point desired, and stood perched on a single stone by the side of the half-clad being, whose wild black hair hung over his shoulders, and whose naked feet clung like those of an ape to the ruin—that the only thing to see was a mass of brick and stone huddled together in what might have been a cellar, and beyond that, a deep dark abyss, which I instantly conjured into a frightful *oubliette!* there was something so unearthly in the expression of the man who held my wrist tight, something so fearful in the den below, and the gloomy scene around, that I was alarmed, and disengaging my arm, gave a spring back and reached the ground.

This feat of mine was followed by a low chuckling laugh from the savage, immediately succeeded by an ominous scowl. We were two females

alone in the midst of ruins and dungeons, and the conviction flashed upon us that our guide was either a madman or an idiot, and in either case a dangerous companion if offended. We collected our courage; and thanking him very humbly for his kindness, offered him a piece of silver, our fears rather than our sense of his services prompting its value. He took it, looked angry, and as we were hurrying away as fast as the long grass would let us, called after us in his strange dialect, evidently dissatisfied.

We did not stop to parley, but hastened on till we reached the open space before the château, where, finding he did not follow, and half ashamed of our fears, we sat ourselves down on a stile, intending to quit the scene of our adventure when a little recovered. Presently, to our dismay, our persecutor started up near us, and advancing quickly as we rose, jumped over the stile and disappeared in the direction of the farm. We felt uneasy, for we observed a peculiar smile on his face as he passed us, and we decided to retrace our steps homewards, when we were startled by the hoarse barking of a dog, and the sound of a human voice as if exciting him, and in another moment we beheld bounding towards us from behind a rising ground an enor-

mous brindled mastiff,* growling and barking furiously.

We stood in considerable consternation at this unpleasant apparition, and were not sorry to see, at a distance, advancing towards us, a peasant woman with a basket on her arm, whose eye and voice recalled our enemy to order in a moment, and relieved us from our uncomfortable position. Like all other persons who keep fierce dogs that have no respect for strangers, she assured us he was a perfect lamb *except when irritated:* but she was extremely annoyed at finding him loose, and hearing our story; nor did she diminish our disquiet by informing us that the man to whom we owed this greeting was a poor creature lately discharged from the madhouse of St. Esprit in the neighbourhood, who being look-

* There is nothing in nature so ugly as a French mastiff. It is unlike any other dog; it has an unnatural hue being brindled and *tacheté* with a colour more like that on a toad's back than anything else. It comes near to what one imagines of a witch's companion: it reminds one of old stories of *loups-garoux*, of a creature chosen by an evil spirit as a mansion for him to inhabit. There is nothing open or honest in his bark; his face is vulgar, his manners uninteresting, and he has no friendliness in his disposition. It is possible that this portrait may be drawn by a prejudiced person accustomed to the respectable dogs to be met with at home, and it may be that the bark of the French animal may be "waur than his bite."

ed upon as harmless, was occasionally employed by the farmers during the harvest when hands were required. Her cheerful good-humour and kind commiseration restored us to tranquillity, and we resumed our walk, not sorry to quit La Garaye, and with no wish to return.

This château was nevertheless the last place in the world where the traveller had a right to expect an inhospitable reception; for it is celebrated throughout the country as having been the abode of every virtue, and the scene of extensive benevolence almost unparalleled. Madame de Genlis, in her Adelaide and Théodore, introduces a pleasing episode regarding this place which gives it interest in the eyes of the poetical; but the exalted characters of its proprietors must make it interesting to all the world.

Claude Toussaint Marot de la Garaye, whose name is still held in veneration in this part of the country, was born at Rennes in 1675; but having adopted Dinan as his residence, is looked upon as belonging exclusively to the Dinannais, more especially as he made it the theatre of his good actions. M. de la Garaye was gifted by nature with a handsome person, and by fortune with large possessions. He was remarkable for all the accomplishments of his time, and entered

the army, as most men of his rank did; but being captivated by the grace and beauty of Madlle de la Motte Piquet, he quitted a military life and married. He then became a magistrate, and afterwards a counsellor of parliament; but he abandoned all other pursuits to give himself entirely up to his ruling passion for the chase. This he indulged in to the greatest extreme at his Château de la Garaye: nor was he alone in his devotion to this amusement; his lady partook of his pleasures and sympathised with his tastes. Her courage was equal to his own, and no impediments arrested her career; barriers, *fossés*, walls, fields, all were alike to her enthusiasm, and such a pair of hunters had never appeared in the country throughout which echoed the sound of their horns and the trampling of their steeds.

Unfortunately, however, a dreadful fall which the lady experienced put an end for ever to her triumphs as a huntress: her active mind now turned its energies into another channel, and establishing a theatre in her château she drew together all the wit, gaiety, and talent in her environs.

Ainsi, dans les plaisirs, ils écoulaient leur vie,
Par un éclat trompeur leur sort faisait envie:
Mais helas! les plaisirs ne sont pas le bonheur;
On le cherche bien loin—il n'est qu'au fond du cœur.

This existence of amusement, however, was not destined to endure, and time brought to both deeper reflection, together with misfortune. The serious and protracted illness of a beloved sister, and the death of his brother-in-law, who expired in his arms, awaked the mind of M. de la Garaye to the sense of the littleness of mere worldly enjoyments, and opened to him a new and untrodden path of more exalted happiness. It was by the couch of his dying brother that he first saw the venerable countenance of the monk whom he had called in too late to assist at the last moments of M. de Pontbriand. The conversations which he had with this pious man changed the whole tenor of his existence, and from that period may be dated the developement of a character in which the seeds of virtue were lying dormant, and only required culture to bring forth their fruits.

Religion, which had shed its balm upon his heart, now appeared to him in all its majesty, and his only thought now was how he could devote himself entirely to its duties, and in his turn comfort and relieve the afflicted. His great anxiety was, how he should communicate to his wife the change that had taken place in his sentiments; for he feared she would look upon the reform which he proposed with an eye of

severity or displeasure. It was, therefore, with unfeigned delight, that he discovered her feelings to be entirely in accordance with his own, and learnt that the same desire to do good, and benefit their fellow-creatures, animated them both.

It was not a sudden burst of devotional feeling which circumstances had called into light, and which temptations might extinguish—it was not a mere profession of good works which they adopted; but with true Christian wisdom they set about their reform steadily and practically, giving up their time to study and meditation preparatory to their proposed trial. M. de la Garaye rightly reflected that the mere wish to be useful was not enough, it was requisite to be able to prove so: he accordingly went to Paris to study surgery, medicine, and chemistry, and in a short time made the most extraordinary progress in those sciences. On his return home, he found that his lady had not, in his absence, neglected their great object; but had devoted herself to render assistance to all who needed it. Aided by her, he now set himself about arranging his house in a manner to adapt it to all the uses of an hospital, such as it ever after remained till the time of his death.

All his stables, which were very extensive,

he converted into chambers for the sick poor; he added a large building in front of the château, arranged in the most convenient manner, properly divided and furnished. He built a chapel and a pavilion in the same line of building where he placed his laboratory; and had different saloons for surgery and chemistry; attaching men, eminent in their profession, to his establishment, whose apartments were in the château. A considerable number of pupils came daily to study, several of whom became distinguished in their line, and added to the honour of the founder. It is superfluous, perhaps, to add, that the best and strictest rules and regulations were laid down for the good order and respectability, pious and decent conduct, of all connected with the hospital; for not a few of those received within its hospitable walls, became redeemed from sin, and left them worthy members of society.

Not content with all the good which was being created under his immediate superintendence, he sought the means of providing, in his neighbourhood, for entire families of poor. He divided the uncultivated lands on his estates into small portions, granted leases, and in a short time he beheld all this territory covered with harvests, which was formerly unproductive, or kept only

for game; he established a pottery; but this not proving successful, in consequence of the unsuitableness of the earth, he formed another plan for the encouragement of industry. Below Châteauneuf, in the parish of St. Suliac, is an immense marsh, well-situated, and he felt of how much service it might be made to the environs, if properly employed. By dint of well-directed labour, he contrived to produce a fine dyke, of more than a quarter of a league in length, which restrained the waves of the sea within certain bounds, and thus created those fine salt-pits, which are at the present day so productive.

In order to occupy all the workmen out of employment, he built the walls which formed a vast enclosure to the park of La Garaye. Amidst all these cares, he indulged in his favourite study of chemistry, and made many valuable discoveries in that science, examined and approved by the Académie. The king himself, anxious to see some of his experiments, sent for him to Marly, the next day the sovereign ordered a sum of fifty thousand francs to be presented to the benevolent philosopher, who dedicated the money to the profit of the poor. He published, with part of the sum, his work, bearing the title of "Chimie hydraulique."

His next act assisted by the king, was the

establishment at Dinan of the Filles de la Sagesse; then followed that of the Hospice des Incurables. Again at Taden, he founded Les Filles des Ecoles charitables; he also, in co-operation with the Abbé de Kergus, established the Ecole des Gentilhommes; but to enumerate all his benefits every parish in the neighbourhood of Dinan must be passed in review.

After forty-five years of uninterrupted benevolence, this worthy man died at the age of eighty, in the year 1755. Two years afterwards he was followed to the tomb by her who had accompanied him in all his acts of goodness; they left behind them names never mentioned but with blessings, and an undying remembrance of their exalted virtues.

The revolution destroyed the château, and drove away the pious men who superintended the hospital! that of the Incurables is now replaced by the establishment of the Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne at St. Esprit, but that of the Filles de la Sagesse still exists in the town of Dinan, where the portraits of Monsieur and Madame de la Garaye are still gratefully preserved.

After hearing so much of the benevolent institutions of the excellent M. de la Garaye, the "Man of Ross" of Dinan, we directed our steps

towards the hospital for the insane at St. Esprit, which, though not the same founded by him, owed its being to his example. The building is very extensive, and admirably conducted. The patients are employed in the gardens, and accompanied in their labours by the good brothers, who share their toil, or rather amusement: the greatest tenderness and indulgence are shown to them; and a system of conciliation is adopted, most humane and most efficacious.

After we had quitted these depressing scenes of human infirmity, we climbed the high hill, half-way up which, in a magnificent position, stands the hospital; and from an over-hanging platform could look down into the courts where several of the inmates were employed with the spade. We observed the listless manner in which one in particular was working, how he struck the earth at random, and without force, then paused for a long time, and leant upon his spade with an unmeaning glance, then renewed his occupation, throwing the earth from side to side with all the infirmity of purpose of a child: meanwhile a brother worked near him, making occasional remarks, and encouraging him to proceed by his example; a few others, similarly busied, appeared to have greater spirit; but there was an air of uncertainty in all they did, like persons moving in sleep.

While I was attempting a sketch of the fine prospect spread out before us, with the castle towers of Dinan, closing the distance and gleaming in the sun like an illumined city, a decently dressed man suddenly rushed up a very precipitous path and stood still before us, then, in an instant, turning round, hurried with a startled air up an opposite path, leaving us somewhat surprised at his apparition. We should not have felt quite tranquil had we known what we afterwards learnt, that he was one of the patients considered well enough to be trusted to walk alone in the neighbourhood of the hospital. Our unpleasant experience of such discharged persons being very recent, the knowledge of this fact would have considerably spoiled our enjoyment in our subsequent rambles. Unconscious, however, that we might meet with any such companions, we proceeded to the extraordinary village which crowns the mountain, and which possesses such singular features that our attention was entirely withdrawn from every other consideration.

As we advanced along the road, we observed, from time to time, a deserted cottage, of an antique form, with long shelving roof and high chimneys, sometimes these dwellings were in an enclosed field, sometimes close to the path; perfect stillness prevailed—not a sound broke the

gloom; the windows were barred, the doors locked and bolted, the little gardens overgrown with weeds, and the walls covered with moss and falling in breaches at the distance of every few yards: wild trees tossed their arms above these ghostly-looking habitations, and all looked the very impersonation of decay.

The ruins of an antique monastery now came in view. A few painted windows, overgrown with weeds and ivy, looked sadly down the stony road. Some carved stones showed that tombs had once been enclosed in the chapel hard-by, and the foundation of what might be a Roman temple, so solid was its cement, flanked the rugged lane which led onwards to an open space, after traversing which, the deserted village was fairly gained. It had evidently been once very extensive, and some of the ruined stone houses are of good size. Streets of irregularly constructed tenements ramble away into one, which leads into a square, on two sides of which doorways of early Norman architecture prove the existence, in other days, of a large religious establishment, and in the centre appears a high cross, uninjured, except by time, bearing every mark of great antiquity, and presenting a precious monument to antiquarian research. How it happened to be forgotten in the time of revo-

lutionary impiety seems another wonder attached to this wonderful place, and adds to the mystery which envelopes all about it.

The cross is composed of a column, light and graceful, supported by a pedestal ornamented with Gothic sculpture, and surrounded by three flying buttresses, all of which rest on a triangular base. The summit of the column is crowned by a piece of sculpture which represents the Eternal Father, holding in his arms the cross on which the body of the Son is extended, while several angels and saints are crowding round the group. All this is carved with great delicacy, and may be of the eleventh or twelfth century; but its origin is unknown, and the whole history of this remarkable village seemed buried in oblivion. The awe inspired by the extreme silence and desolation around was only now dissipated by the sound of flails, as a party of threshers were assembled in the open space round the cross, engaged in their occupation: they probably belonged to some neighbouring farm, as not a hut or house was in a state fit for habitation, in the silent and mysterious village of St. Esprit.

This method of threshing corn is very primitive. We had been amused in our walk to the well, by passing through a small bourg, which is the direct and only way to that unfrequented

spot, and finding it entirely filled with men, women, and children, all busy with their flails, beating out the corn on the stones of the street, amidst the straw, where, every here and there, lay nestled the infants of the inhabitants, apparently enjoying the gaiety of the scene, as their parents, with joyous countenances, moved in a circle, in a kind of druidical dance, using their flails in a sort of measured time, while foot-passengers and waggons passed amongst them without stopping their career. It was sufficiently comic, and so singular that we could not help pausing to observe the regularity of their strokes and the rapidity with which they advanced in their work, in this unsophisticated manner.

CHAPTER XV.

St. Malo.—Legends.—The Murdered Family.—Good Faith.—THE BRETONS.—Allan Fergan.—Bridal Ribbon.—The Return from England.—The Labourer.—Superstition.——The Way-side Cross.

IT is a charming excursion by the steam-boat from Dinan to St. Malo; numerous pretty villages and romantic sites, steep rocks, and picturesque caverns adorn the sides of the Rance. After passing the Courbure, and having lost sight of the lower town of Dinan and its strange, antique-shaped buildings, which, however, present no character of interest—the ruins of an ancient chapel, with walls overgrown with ivy, are the first objects which strike you; the next is the cross of Taden, where repose the ashes of the good M. de la Garaye. Beyond, are the shades of La Mettrie, and the little harbour of Chatelier, whose small houses rise from the shore to the summits of the hills. The ground is here considerably elevated, and

the mill of Livet crowns the mountain, once the abode of a fairy dwarf, who levied contributions on the navigators of the river, just where the Ecluse de Livet now forms a picturesque feature in the picture. The vast plain of Mordreuc now appears, with Pleudihen on the right, and Plouër on the left, rich in apples and in corn.

The river here narrows, and *the Port* is reached—*the* Port as it is called by the Dinannais, for it is their Dieppe—their first introduction to the sea—their bathing place and fishing rendezvous, and is a beautiful spot with its rocky shores and majestic perspective of waters, its cultivated fields and romantic grottoes, and the lively scene constantly animated by boats passing backwards and forwards. Just beyond this point rise the heights dedicated to legendary renown; here in gloomy nights may be heard, the howlings of the guardian fiend of the Mare de St. Coulman, the sudden inundation of whose waters overwhelmed a whole town in times long past. Here is the Point de Garrot, the abode of the Dragon, whose power was omnipotent in the country: here is the Goule d'Enfer of bad renown, to chase away the terrors of which, the monks of St. Malo and of St. Aubin des Bois were obliged to

fortify themselves with the excellent wine which the coteau produced. Here can be seen the spire of St. Suliac, and here, therefore, the curious may trace the route of the asses of Rigourdenne, who so much annoyed the good saint,

"who little knew
What those wily *beasts* could do."

This charming village, reflected so calmly in the mirror of the clear waters, of which one might say,

"Surely this scene was unprofaned by slaughters,"

was the scene, during the wars of the League, of fearful struggles; it suffered a blockade — its church was besieged, and the unfortunate refugees who had sought shelter there, were, to the number of two hundred and fifty, savagely butchered. The river here divides into two branches, one of which preserves the name of the Rance, and the other is lost amidst the salt-marshes of La Goutte, at Chateauneuf.

Just by is the little island of Notre Dame, formerly inhabited by benevolent monks, whose care in ringing a bell to warn boatmen to avoid their rock was repaid by them with an Ave Maria Stella, and some faggots confided to the current, which always bore them safe to the

good men. The Revolution did not spare these kind and useful recluses; their priory was razed to the ground, and the monks dispersed. One, however, not very many years ago, was still to be recognised, wandering like an unquiet spirit amidst the wreck of his former abode, and asking those alms with timid accent which none ever thought of refusing to the good brothers of his order in the times which he regretted. He was a gentle, amiable old man, and much beloved by all in his neighbourhood.

On the shore, near the Passage de Jouvante, are the dilapidated remains of a small isolated house, where a frightful tragedy happened some years since. The deserted walls still stand, as if for a memorial of crime; and thrown, as it were, upon the shingles, it has the effect of an abandoned wreck cast on shore by the retreating wave.

If you ask the boatmen to explain its appearance, they reply gravely to your inquiries, and you learn that in that house a whole family were murdered one fearful night, when the storm which raged around prevented the shrieks of the victims from being heard. The next morning, the mangled remains of these unfortunate persons, and a little child who had escaped the fury of the miscreants, revealed the hideous

event; but no light was ever thrown on the deed, and time has not explained the mysterious horrors of that dreadful night.

You turn away with a shudder from this memento of guilt, and cast your eyes on a magnificent spectacle. The château of Mont-Marin, and the cheerful house of Cancavale appear for a few moments, and then an immense panorama is open before you. The hills of the Briantais, the Fours à chaux, the Corbières, with their white gleaming villas, the military port of St. Servan, above which rises the town of St. Malo in an amphitheatre, with the dome of its antique cathedral towering above all. The tower of Solidor, with its blackened barbicans, elevating its feudal head on a group of grotesquely-shaped rocks; the Fort de la Cité advancing its bastions, and beyond all, the sea, the glorious sea, with its forest of masts in the distance.

St. Malo is too well known to need description; several hours can be pleasantly passed there, and a visit to it forms a delightful day's excursion from Dinan, whose inhabitants fail not to take advantage of so easy a mode of novel amusement.

I am unable to judge what may be the state of commerce at St. Malo at the present time,

but I imagine the period is gone by when the word *bankrupt* was unknown: before the Revolution the merchants in this town were held in such esteem for probity and honour, that if a merchant found himself in any difficulty he had only to name it to be instantly relieved by his brother merchants on the faith of his simple promise. It is told of one of these respectable men, in this golden age of merchandise when *les toiles Bretagnes* were a commodity in request all over the world, that finding his affairs embarrassed he shut himself up in his own house in a melancholy mood, unwilling to reveal to any one his hitherto unprecedented position. His difficulties, however, became whispered about, and that very night without his knowing from whom the assistance came, the sums he required were secretly conveyed to him. It is said that in general the good faith which characterised the fathers has not degenerated in the children, and that the merchants of St. Malo deserve their high reputation still.

Amongst the papers of the family of M. Baron Dutaya were found minutes of very severe regulations which were in force before the Revolution, and had all the strength of law, which none dreamt of infringing.

It would be justly considered presumptuous in a person who has remained but a short time in Bretagne, and that, probably, in the most civilised part, to attempt to draw the character of the inhabitants from personal observation, to any extent. That the general tone of their manners is graver than in any other part of France appears obvious; but that they are less civil, or have less intelligence, is certainly not the case, although they have been accused of being both savage and stupid. As in a great part of their country instruction has not as yet made the rapid progress which of late years has marked its course elsewhere, it is not to be expected that the Bretons, removed as they are from intercourse with more enlightened people, should have entirely shaken off the fetters of ignorance and superstition; but wherever schools have been established there has been found no want of capacity in the peasants, and little opposition is now made to the spread of learning.

Doubtless in a few years the Bretons will have redeemed themselves from the contempt too long encouraged against them by *the French*, who have always been looked upon as a separate nation, and one hostile to their interests and their persons, perhaps with too much reason; for abuse of a Breton is as common to those of other pro-

vinces, particularly in the immediate vicinity, as it is unjust. When it is remembered how many great and learned men, poets, and warriors have been natives of Brittany, there is every reason that France should be proud of these her rejected children, and that she should welcome in them some of her brightest hopes for the future.

It must be confessed that the antipathy of the nations towards each other has always been mutual: the early poets of Brittany when they wished to describe the country of their *foreign* neighbours represented it as divided from them by mysterious lakes, enchanted valleys, and fearful scenes which must be passed before this hostile land could be attained. Many of their ballads have allusions to this belief,* and it is in these popular records of opinion and feeling that character developes itself. The Bretons, although their language is in effect the same as that of the Welsh, have little in their character which can be likened to that of the natives of Wales: they are less lively, less impetuous, and more stable; still less, perhaps, except in certain habits, do they resemble the Irish, although the treatment they receive from their neighbours has considerable similarity to the tender mercies ex-

* Ballad, page 193.

perienced from the English by the sons of Erin from time immemorial! but if a judgment were to be formed of their character from their sadness, poetical feeling, and the exquisitely pathetic simplicity of those ballads named above, one would pronounce them near kin to the Scotch.

Whether they have features of resemblance to other people, or are altogether *original*, which I am inclined to think, the Bretons are an interesting people; and when they take advantage of the opportunities now offered them, will doubtless be appreciated. The best sailors of the French navy are Bretons; they are principally from the department of Finisterre, where the Breton character exhibits its most peculiar traits. They are brave, intrepid, capable of enduring almost incredible fatigue without a murmur, totally unmoved by danger and quite regardless of pain.

At home the Breton sailor is gay, generous, prodigal, and careless, faithful to his country and his friend. Of his sobriety little need be said after the privations which he can endure with stoical firmness; the excesses into which he falls demand excuse, but certain it is that he exhibits less philosophy on shore than at sea. Perhaps this is after all but the general description of a *sailor;* it would answer just as well as a portrait

of a British man-of-war's man, who is the model of the whole species: but the peasant is a more correct specimen of the native of Bretagne, and in Finisterre and parts of Côtes-du-Nord the ancient manners and habits are more preserved in their original simplicity, with all their defects, beauties, and peculiarities, than in others.

ALLAN FERGAN.

This is one of the most favourite ballads on the coast of Bretagne, and from its maritime character may not be misplaced here. The subject relates to the period when William the Conqueror having determined on attempting the conquest of England, published abroad his intention and offered great pay and the pillage of the country to all robust, tall, and able-bodied men who would join his standard, and serve him with lance, with sword, or with cross-bow. A multitude answered his appeal: they came flocking from every quarter, far and near, from north and south. Some arrived from Maine and Anjou, some from Poitou and Bretagne, some from France and Flanders, from Aquitaine and Burgundy, from Piémont and the borders of the Rhine. All the adventurers by profession, all

the outcasts of Western Europe lost no time in hurrying to join him.

Count Eudes de Bretagne sent his two sons to William to aid him in this mighty undertaking. These two young men, who were called Brian and Allan,* came to the rendezvous of the Norman troops accompanied by a band of knights from their own country. Among these auxiliaries was the young Breton whose melancholy fate is related by the popular poets of his native land in the following strains, which there is every reason to believe was composed at the period when the event took place (1066).

That he was a simple peasant, M. Villemarqué is not inclined to believe, but rather that he was a knight, founding his opinion on a circumstance mentioned in the ballad, namely, the *bridal ribbon* of his mother, "Ruban des Noces," as the observance of that custom belonged apparently to the higher classes.

It was formerly customary, on a wedding-day, before the bridal party went to church, or the bridegroom was arrived, for the bride to descend into the saloon of the house where the relations and friends were already assembled, and to seat

* Allan Fergan son of *Havoise*, called in the legend *the Duchess:* why he is particularly so distinguished does not appear.

herself on a sumptuously-adorned bed. The lover who had been rejected, and who was called the 'Diskaret,' then came forward, and bound round her brow the *bridal ribbon*. This ribbon was of three colours; white, emblematical of the innocence of the young maiden; rose-colour, like her beauty; and black, like the mourning which suited the Diskaret. A kiss was his fee for discharging the singular duty which custom imposed on him.

The bridal ribbon was religiously preserved in a casket with the jewels of the family, and was never taken out but on fête days. In the course of time, the hues of the ribbon faded, like the fresh beauties of the young bride, her early dreams and the regrets of the supplanted lover; but the affection which she had sworn to her husband, of which as it were the hand of his rival has bound the tie, never passed away, but was kept as an eternal pledge, which followed her to the tomb as a symbol of undying faith.

It is a proof of the tenderness of the mother of Silvestre, that she parts with that which is most precious to her in the hope of recalling him, when she binds round the neck of her carrier-dove the bridal ribbon held so sacred.

THE RETURN FROM ENGLAND.

DIALECT OF CORNOUAILLE.

Etré parrez Pouldregat ha parrez Plouar é,&c..

From Pouldregat to Plouaré,
All the land that lies between,
Knight and squire in brave array
Spurring for the field are seen,
Summon'd by the duchess' son
To the Saxon war begun.
From all Bretagne trooping fast
O'er the foaming seas they haste.

" My Silvestre too must go—
I have begged his stay in vain,
But one child I had—and, lo!
He has followed in their train.

" Sleepless as I lingered long,
Kerlaz' maids began their song,
In my ear their accents rung
Of my absent son they sung:

' Heaven protect thy wand'rings now!
Ah Silvestre! where art thou?
Art thou on the foaming deep
Many hundred leagues away,
Dost thou 'midst the surges sleep,*
To the rav'ning fish a prey!

* Similar is Milton's beautiful apostrophe to drowned Lycidas.

" Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides—
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world!"

'Hadst thou been content to stay—
Lead the life thy father led,
Thou wert happy as the day
Thou hadst been betroth'd and wed.
Wed to Manna—fairest maid,
She to whom thy vows were paid:
Then thou wouldst have lived to see
Children climbing round thy knee,
Children with their merry din
Letting joy and pleasure in.'

" Near my door, within a cell
Of the rock, there loves to dwell
Close conceal'd, a pigeon white,
Him I 'll from his nest invite;
On his neck of ivory
Will a letter safely lie,
With my bridal ribbon bound
All his silver feathers round:
That shall call my son once more,
And my Silvestre restore.

Go, my dove—ah! swiftly go,
Rise upon thy wings of snow,
Fly far o'er the stormy sea,
Bid my son return to me.
Fly where battle's thunders sound,
Gaze with piercing eye around,
Go—midst carnage fierce and wild,
Bring me tidings of my child!"

" 'Tis my mother's dove I see
Wont amidst the wood to be;
Now he skims the waters nigh,
Now he seeks the mast so high!"

" Hail, Silvestre—list to me—
Letters I have brought to thee."

" Bid my mother dry the tear,
Bid my father be of cheer,
For three years and but a day
Keeps me from their arms away."

Three long years were past and o'er,
But Silvestre came no more!

" Fare thee well, beloved one!
Now my latest hopes are gone,
Never shall we meet again!
If the loud and stormy main
Cast thy bones upon the strand
I will watch them float to land,
Gather them—how tenderly!
Kiss them, cherish them—and die!"

Scarce she spoke—a bark appear'd
And a Breton flag it bore,
Soon the rocky bay it near'd
And a wreck it reach'd the shore.
Helm and oars and rudder lost,
Mast and sails all split and torn,
Beaten on that rugged coast,
On the surging breakers borne.

Full of dead—that pallid lay—
Whence it comes no tongue can say,
Nor how long that fated bark
Had been toss'd by tempests dark;—
And Silvestre there reposed—
But no friend his eyes had closed,
No fond mother's tender voice
Bade him at the last rejoice,
No kind father's soothing care—
He was lying lifeless—there!

The peasant is said to be firm to a degree approaching obstinacy, full of humanity and courage under ordinary circumstances, but vindictive, even to ferocity, in the first movement of anger. He is devout to fanaticism, particularly in the interior of the country. All this sounds very Irish, but the wit and gaiety which would have been added to the picture of an individual of that nation, must be very much sobered down in describing a Breton, in whom gravity is more observable, in general, than light-heartedness.

Very few of the common people in Finisterre speak French, although many comprehend it when spoken. In the arrondissement of Brest and Morlaix the food of the labourer is of oats and buck-wheat boiled into a porridge soup, with bacon and barley bread. The better order of peasants make pancakes on a Saturday. It is remarkable that this delicacy, extremely good in the district of Tréguier, is without flavour and as hard as parchment throughout Léon. The masters and servants eat of the same dish, but the master begins first, then his male children, *and the servants of the farm*, after whom follow the women, at the head of which party is the mistress: this domestic arrangement savours but little of gallantry, but this precedence of the men obtains in every situation amongst the Bre-

tons, and is again observable amongst the class of *vignerons* on the Loire, whose habits are, in some respects, similar; for instance, the *vigneron*, like the Breton labourer, drinks only water with his meals, on every day but Saturday; but here the likeness ends, for the *vigneron* is always sober, and the Breton seldom lets a market-day escape without drinking to excess; the great vice of this people.

The style in which the labourers live is much the same everywhere. Their house, or rather hut, is of the meanest description, and, though often situated amongst charming scenery, and surrounded by a luxuriant growth of shrubs and wild flowers, is so squalid, so wretched, as almost to defy description; men, women, children, pigs, cattle and poultry live together; the human party sleeping *in layers*, one above another, on straw, and with as little attention to cleanliness or decency as their animal companions.

I have heard their *ménage* described in a manner to be scarcely credited, but in many instances I believe the picture not to be overdrawn.

Placed upon the mud floor, which is generally full of holes and water, is a long black wooden table, with circular hollows at distances, and into these fixed bowls are put, filled with potatoes and chestnuts; milk is poured on them,

and this mess is partaken of by the family, in the most primitive style which can be conceived, by the help of hands and mouths alone, the pigs and other occupants of the mansion finishing what is left, and acting as scavengers on the occasion. This, of course, is amongst the very lowest class; the farmers and better order have superior houses and more decent habits; some are even remarkably clean and neat in their domestic arrangements, but few can boast of much light or air, and their floors are very seldom well paved or boarded. The poem here given, exhibits the labourer as he was; it is to be hoped that time has improved his condition.

THE LABOURER.

DIALECT OF LÉON.

Sálaouit tud, duvar méaz ha klévit eur gentel, &c.

Hear the song a minstrel made
How a labourer's life is pass'd;
'Tis a sad and weary trade,
But he trusts that Heaven will aid
One still patient to the last.

No respite can the labourer know,
All skies alike behold his toil,
The storm may howl, the winds may blow,
By heat or cold, by rain or snow,
Still in the fields he turns the soil.

The labourer's vest is coarsest stuff,
Not like the townsman brave and clean,
But soiled and dusty, stained and rough:
The townsman deems it grace enough
To give him work and scorn his mien.

Wide is the diff'rest life that 's led
Between the country and the town,
One dwells at ease, is fully fed,
On fish and meat and dainty bread,
And softly rests on beds of down.

The other scarce has time to steal
From toil an hour to eat at all,
Black bread and weakest drink his meal,
Yet must he pay, in woe or weal,
Taxes, rents, dues on him must fall!

The Priest, the pastor and the poor,
As right demands, he still must pay,
Wages, his fellows to secure,
Or of no help he can be sure,
None will be patient, none will stay.

He counts his scanty stock in vain,
The law's sharp clutch his means assail,
Or cheated of his little gain,
Or jeer'd by richer rogues, who fain
Would see his honest earnings fail.

To him small honour any pay,
Contempt for him has words in store,
And yet his labour is the stay,
Of all the world so rich and gay—
What were they if he worked no more?

This is our life,—a wretched one!
Our lot unkind, our star unblest,
Our prospects hard, no joys our own,
But Patience still! Although we groan,
In Heaven we trust, by man opprest!

This is rather a gloomy, though, unfortunately, at an early period, too just a picture! It could not have been written by a *Frenchman*, whose lightness of heart, under equal privations, would enable him to forget them; but the Breton is prone to dwell upon his grievances, and his reflective character leads him to *consider them too deeply*.

When the dress of these peasants is considered, their long matted hair, thick beard, never combed, never washed, their large plaited trousers seldom taken off, even at night, some idea may be formed of the dirty state in which they must necessarily be. It can be only *at a distance* that their jackets covered with buttons, their large hats, their gaiters and sabots, can form a combination which induce one to forget the disgusting in the picturesque! Their costume is varied extremely, according to the different districts and communes; that of Saint Trégonnec (*arrondissement* of Brest) presents precisely the period of Louis XIV, with large puffed and plaited trousers, black stockings, shoes with buckles, beaver hats, ornamented with bands of velvet, crossed with a thousand colours, and a wide sash of variegated stuff, generally a bright tint.

That of Quimper recalls the costume of the ancient Dukes of Bretagne; they wear red or

violet coats, with spotted linings, and trimmed with a tape of a paler colour, trousers less full and less plaited than those mentioned above, and of the same hue as the coat, and similarly trimmed at the seams. Their long hair falls in thick masses on their shoulders. Some of the *exquisites* have the date when their coat was made embroidered in red worsted on the side! The women at Quimperlé have a costume almost Swiss, and here their beauty is much cited; but in general they must yield the palm to their Norman neighbours, who resemble them in very few instances; the Breton men, however, are certainly handsomer than the Norman.

Nothing can exceed the superstition of the natives of Finisterre, and indeed throughout Brittany; though, in many parts, it is fortunately wearing away rapidly as instruction advances.

All the omens, signs, and wonders, banished from other lands, seem to have found shelter here! the most extravagant belief of the Eastern or Northern world, has a niche amongst them. Every bird that sings or screeches is thought to give out some occult meaning, every meeting of roads is haunted by an evil spirit, every sound is a *charette de la mort (carriguel an ancon)*, every roaring torrent a howling fiend, every fountain an abode of fairies!

THE WAY-SIDE CROSS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DIALECT OF CORNOUAILLE.

A little bird with azure head
Amidst the forest sings,
The feathers near his heart are red,
And golden are his wings.

That bird flew down at day-break fair
And by our hearth stood still,
Just at the time I said my prayer,
"Sweet bird!—what is thy will?"

His words were many, and as sweet
As buds the rose-tree bears,
"A mate," he said, "for thee is meet
For comfort in thy cares."

'Twas near the cross beside the way
On Monday, met my eye,
A lovely maid as fair as day,
Or saints beyond the sky.

As lucid water in a glass
Her eyes were bright to see;
Perchance on Sunday at the mass
Those eyes may shine on me!

As white as pearls her small teeth gleam,
Her cheek would shame the rose,
Her hands as milk pour'd fresh may seem
That in the *black bowl* flows.

The lord of Ponkalek can tell
Whole heaps of golden ore,
But had I more, and mines as well,
Without her I were poor!

If by my cot grew flowers of gold
Instead of green fern tall,
And all were mine to have and hold,
Without her what were all!

All things must follow nature's will,
The stream flows from the fount,
The torrent rushes from the hill,
The fire will seek to mount.

The dove must have a shelter'd nest,
The corpse demands a grave,
The soul seeks Paradise the blest,
And I thy love must have.

Each Monday morn my secret prayer
Beside the cross I 'll say,
In honour of the gentle fair
Who may return that way.

The mention of the name of Ponkalek, in this ballad, shows it to have been composed anterior to the close of the last century, as the family have since that time quitted their estates in Basse-Cornouaille.

CHAPTER XVI.

Breton Popular Poets. — The Minstrel. — Blind Bard. — Noziou-Néza. — The Pardon. — The Druid Circle. — Les Kloer. — Geneviève de Rustéfan.

ONG have the Bretons, amongst other traits of character connected with the primitive simplicity of their manners, retained their respect for the *singers and* recounters of their national poetry. The reverence paid to their bards of old, which arose from religious feeling, appears to be perpetuated towards the race who, in their turn, have high claims on such a distinction; for their object is not only to amuse and to please, but they seem to feel that they have a more serious mission to fulfil. This class of persons are the preservers of the language and of popular records; they may also justly be said to be the encouragers and promoters of propriety and good manners, and are certainly the most active instruments of civilization in Bretagne, if the cultivation of noble,

honest, and kind feelings be looked upon as a means.

The eloquent and patriotic writer whose opinion I follow,—M. de Villemarqué, in the introduction to his delightful work, which, by its truth, taste, and the exquisite translations it presents, has renewed at the present day all the ancient enthusiasm for ballad lore, which Percy and Sir Walter Scott awoke amongst us, — gives many instances of the power exercised by the modern minstrels of Bretagne over the common people. He mentions, amongst others, the following facts which have come under his own observation.

In the heart of Basse Cornouaille, lives, in a solitary cottage, a poor peasant, named Loïz Guivar, who, from an infirmity, has acquired the appellation of Loïz Kam, or Louis le Boiteux: he is altogether, in his outward appearance, a correct representation of the dwarf who figured at the courts of the ancient Kings of France: he is endowed with a very remarkable share of intelligence: his temper is mild and calm, and he possesses perfect equanimity: his manners and conduct are irreproachable, but he is considered in the light of a being gifted beyond ordinary mortals, and having occult knowledge: he is a poet, and his memory is stored

with an immense quantity of ballads and legends. He had many traditional secrets transmitted to him by his ancestors, and the belief in his superhuman qualities, joined to his personal probity, have gained for him in his parish a certain moral authority. He is consulted on all occasions, and his decisions have great weight, for his judgment is generally sanctioned by public opinion, and his songs have always a useful end which fixes them in the memory.

The vice of the Bretons, which has been already alluded to, that of drinking to excess on fête and market days, though, on other occasions, they are sober, has been attacked in various ways for a series of years, and, unfortunately, with little result. A few years ago, the frightful consequences of this habit exhibited themselves in an appalling manner in the parish in which Loïz Kam resides. He composed a poem on the subject, which had so good an effect, that in his canton the frequenters of the tavern have sensibly diminished. He lets no opportunity escape for inculcating morality and conveying instruction by means of his songs, which are so much more efficacious than any other mode, that it is well known while the cholera raged in Bretagne, no better plan could be devised by the physicians to spread a knowledge

of the proper remedies, than by employing these minstrels to repeat them to the people in song.

A very recent fact attests the truth of this assertion, and proves in how much respect, amounting to religious veneration, the character of the popular poet is held.

At St. Pol de Léon, only a few months ago, on a fair-day, a blind singer had drawn a crowd around him. After the usual introduction and exposition of his subject, which was that of a frightful murder committed in the canton, he paused for a moment; then, addressing himself to the people, he said, "Christians, before I go further, let us say a *pater* and a *De profundis* for the assassin and his victim." At these words he took off his hat; every one of his audience followed his example, and, making the sign of the cross, he recited the expiatory prayers, to which the people responded with the deepest devotion, after which he resumed his song!

It is at the meetings called Noziou-néza, as well as at fêtes, weddings, and funerals, that the minstrels are most in request. The Noziou-néza is a kind of *soirée* during winter, at which the country people are in the habit of assembling; and there, seated by a blazing hearth in the cottage chosen for their rendezvous, from six o'clock in the evening till late in the night,

old men and women, young girls and youths, take their turn to sing and relate stories. Here the poet minstrel with his *rébek* is always a welcome guest, and he frequently arrives in the middle of the night, and knocks at the door: he is hailed with pleasure, hospitality offered him, and his talents immediately put in requisition; this he does from farm to farm, as his ancestors of old went from castle to castle. At these meetings and at fairs, the ballad style is preferred; at wedding-fêtes and agricultural celebrations, songs of love most obtain. At the religious assemblies, known by the name of *Pardons*, both historical poems, canticles, legends, and songs are to be heard.

In Wales, the national fêtes, still preserved by the bards, and always kept up in the present day with great spirit, have lost all the religious character which formerly distinguished them, and are now purely poetical; but in Bretagne, where the religion is Catholic, they have not changed, and possess at this moment all the same features which they presented in by-gone years.

Every grand *pardon* lasts at least three days. From the eve all the bells are rung, every one is occupied in ornamenting the chapels and altars and in dressing the saints in the national cos-

tume: a patron and a patroness of the fête are named, and are distinguished like a bride and bridegroom, the former by ornaments of *little mirrors** round her white cap, the latter by a large bouquet decorated with ribbons. Towards the close of day the church is swept and the dust thrown into the air, as a propitiation for the travellers who are expected next day. In the most conspicuous part of the nave are then exhibited the offerings to the patron saint, consisting of sacks of wheat, hanks of flax, a snowy fleece, a new beehive, and other rural productions, as in ancient times. Afterwards the whole community dance to the sound of instruments, sometimes on the hills near the church, sometimes by the side of a fountain held in esteem in the village, and not unfrequently near a dolmen, the ruins of which serve for seats to the musicians. Nothing can be conceived more unsophisticated and romantic than this! it appears like hearing a page of an old fairy tale, yet such are still the usages to be found in this primitive part of France! It is not a century since it was the custom to dance in the interior of the church in honour of the patron saint, but the bishops having long disapproved of it, at length succeeded in putting it down. There is no doubt

* See Touraine.

it was a remnant of druidical worship, as is indeed the whole ceremony.

On certain occasions of rejoicing, the people light fires on some height: the pile is formed of heath and fern, and other light materials, at the top of which is placed a garland, and as the flame mounts towards it, the assembly dance round the fire twelve times reciting prayers. The old men then surround it with a circle of stones in the midst of which they put a cauldron, in which formerly meats *for the priests* were cooked: at the present day the children fill it with pieces of metal, and by passing rushes over the edges of the vessel contrive to draw forth rude sounds resembling the tones of a harp, while the attendant beggars seated round sing in chorus legends of the holy patron of the place.

Thus the ancient bards sang by starlight hymns in honour of their gods, before the *magic bowl*, exalted in the midst of a *circle of stones*, where was prepared the repast of the brave.*

The morning of the fête of the *pardon*, at daybreak, bands of pilgrims arrive from distant parts. As soon as they hear the bells at a distance they kneel and take off their hats and make the sign of the cross. Sometimes whole cantons come, with the banners of their cantons dis-

* *Taliesin Myvyrian.* See M. de Villemarqué.

played, with their pastors at their head, and these are met by the clergy of the *pardon* in a similar state. After vespers the whole procession parades the country or the shore, sometimes it stops in the cemetery of the town and a religious ceremony takes place, joined by all the country nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood.

The pilgrims pass the night in tents on the plains: the popular bards go from tent to tent singing canticles almost all night; the whole of this day being consecrated to religion. The next day begins the reign of amusement, games, and lists, and courses take place, and dances close the evening. The eve and last night belong peculiarly to the minstrels, who come from all parts of Bretagne to the *pardon:* the last night in particular is appropriated to *les kloer:* they sing their newest songs and best compositions under the large trees at the entrance to the churchyard. Sometimes at Tréguier and Vannes, they act in the open air dramas founded on the life and miracles of the patron saint; these dramas are continued for some days during the fête, like the ancient mysteries of the Frères de la Passion.

These Pardons are frequently mentioned in the popular ballads of which the following is one which appears to me peculiarly touching.

GENEVIÈVE DE RUSTÉFAN.

In the centre of the parish of Nizon, near Pontaven in Basse Cornouaille, is to be seen the ruined château of Rustéfan, the architecture of which belongs to the fifteenth century; but little is known respecting it, and tradition has left few reminiscences of its proprietors. A mystery hangs over the ivy-covered and desolate walls, and an involuntary awe steals on the traveller's mind as he contemplates them and hears the tales, still credited in the neighbourhood, and the reasons given for the discontinuance of dances which formerly took place on the castle hill. It seems that one evening, when all was gaiety and hilarity amongst the assembled peasants, their mirth was suddenly put a stop to by the apparition, at one of the ruined loopholes of the castle, of the shaven head of an aged priest, whose eyes, glowing with unearthly fire, were seen glaring on the revels which disturbed the quiet of his abode. As if this was not sufficiently appalling, the terrified peasants who may have ventured to pass these ruins about midnight, have observed in the great hall of the château a bier covered with a pall, at the four corners of which burned large white tapers such as are used at the funeral of a noble

maiden; and not unfrequently by the light of the moon is seen wandering and flitting about the ramparts, sometimes singing mournfully, but oftener weeping bitterly, the figure of a young lady dressed in a gown of green silk, embroidered with flowers of gold.

The following ballad, very popular both in Tréguier and Cornouaille, will explain the connection between the ghostly priest and the sorrowing maiden. It is said to have been composed by a minstrel of Tréguier.

GENEVIÈVE DE RUSTÉFAN.

DIALECT OF TRÉGUIER.

Pé oa potr Iannik, &c.

What time his flock young Iann* kept
He little thought a priest to be,
But gaily rose, and sweetly slept,
Nor e'er of priest or monk dream'd he.
Light was his heart, as oft he sung,
"The maid I love is fair and young!"

One morn his mother called him home.
"This life will fit my son no more;
Leave there the sheep, to Kemper† come,
And learn, at length, some better lore.

* Pronounced *I-ann*. Two syllables.

† Quimper, or Quimper Corentin, is an ancient city, form-

For you must study well and long,
That I a priest my son may view,
Forget at once each idle song,
Say to the fair young maids adieu."

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erly the capital of the kingdom of Armorican Cornouailles whose first known sovereign was the famous King Grallon. Its earliest fortifications were built in 1209, but were shortly afterwards demolished. Pierre de Dreux, the great captain of his age, surrounded the town with a terraced wall, flanked with immense towers, having projecting parapets with machicoulis, such as are in great part still to be seen there. This town has been several times besieged and taken. In 1344 Charles of Blois carried it by assault, after a combat of six hours, and made a horrible massacre of the inhabitants. The Count of Montford made an ineffectual attempt to retake it the following year. During the wars of the League it was on the side opposed to Henry IV: it was besieged by Marshal d'Aumont, and taken after a vigorous resistance.

Quimper is delightfully situated on the declivity of a hill, at the confluence of the Rivers Odet and Eir. At a little distance from the town is a magnificent mass of rocks, six hundred feet high, covered with wood and heath, from whence is a splendid prospect of rivers and mountains, crowned with forests of oak, fir, and poplar. There are many curious antique houses remaining, and the cathedral is one of the four grandest in lower Brittany. Its chief portal, formerly adorned with numerous statues, is very fine; that facing the Rue St. Catherine is remarkable for its delicate ornaments and exquisite proportions: carved on it may be seen several escutcheons of ancient Breton families. The tombs which formerly decorated the interior exist no longer.

At the extremity of a long and fine promenade on the left bank of the Odet, is the priory of Locmaria, the architecture of which is of various ages, some arches and pillars remaining of a period as early as 900 and 1000. Near this precious monument is the manor of Poulquinan, said to have been the favourite abode of King Grallon, some of whose most antique walls remain, though the principal parts are not older than the fifteenth century. There are several other picturesque castles in the neighbourhood.

PART II.

The maids of all the land most fair,
Of beauty and of grace the flower,
Who raised their heads the brightest there
Were daughters to the Lord of Naour.
As shines the moon the stars above,
They shone all majesty and love!

A milk-white steed each maiden brought,
Whose hoofs resounded on the way,
When they the Pardon yearly sought,
And at Pontaven came to pray.

Their kirtles green, of silk so rare,
With gold chains glitter'd as they moved,—
None with the youngest might compare,
And she, they said, young Iann loved.

"To gain my hand four suitors strove,
And each was forced the vows to take,
But Iannik Flécher is my love,
And I am dying for his sake!"

PART III.

Fair Geneviève was at her gate
As Iann passed his vows to pay,
Embroid'ring lace the damsel sate,
With glitt'ring threads of silver gay
(The kerchief that she works so neat
Were covering for a chalice meet!)

"Iann Flécher, list to me!
Take not vows that fit thee not.
Is the past 'twixt me and thee,
And all promises forgot?

All the tender words we said,
All the faithful vows we made?"

"Oh! I dare not turn me now,
Dare not think upon the past,
For the Church has claimed my vow,
And the fatal lot is cast!"

"Thou the golden ring hast lost
Given thee in the dance of yore?"
"No:—the pledge I prized the most
God has ta'en, 'tis mine no more!"

"O Iann Flécher! turn again;
Take all the wealth I call my own,
I'll follow thee through toil and pain,
I'll love, I'll live for thee alone!
The coarsest clothes for thee I'll wear,
For thee all hardships learn to bear,
But say not I must lose thy love!
Or, if I fail thy heart to move,
Come thou, a priest, beside my bed,
And read the office for the dead."

"O Geneviève! a mighty chain
Has twined its fetters round my heart,
O Geneviève! our tears are vain,
I am a priest and we must part!"

PART IV.

And now the young priest is profess'd,
And as he passed the Manor hall,
He said, while sorrow swelled his breast,
"Hail! Lord of Rustéfan — hail all!
Much joy on each may Heaven bestow,
(More than my heart can ever know!)

'Tis my first mass this morn, I say;
Will any come to grace the day?"

" Oh yes, young priest, and thou shalt see
The first who offers shall be me:
The plate shall twenty crowns receive,
Ten more thy god-mother shall give,
In honour of our pious priest
Who follows thus the Lord's behest."

PART V.

I stray'd by Penn-al-Lenn that day*
For I the mass was fain to hear,
I saw the people in dismay,
Come trooping fast with looks of fear;
" Aged mother, wilt thou say
If the mass is done to-day?"

" He begun it, fair and well,
But it is not ended yet,
For his tears so fast they fell
That his books of prayer were wet.

" No: in vain to read he strove,
Vainly tried to end the hymn,
For his heart was torn with love,
And his eyes with tears were dim.

" He would check their rising flood,
He would yet the words repeat,
At the altar where he stood
Geneviève is at his feet!
And she cried, in piercing tone,
' For the love of God—forbear!
Iann! every hope is gone,
And I perish in despair!

* The bard is supposed to be speaking in his own person.

Iann ! thou hast caused my death,
Take, oh ! take my dying breath ! '"

* * * *

* * * *

Iann Flécher since that time
Is the rector of the town :
I who made this mournful rhyme
Oft have wander'd up and down,
By the church and by the vale
Where I heard the fatal tale,
And have seen the young priest grieve
O'er the grave of Geneviève :
Years past on—I went and came,
But his tears flow'd on the same !

CHAPTER XVII.

Montfort la Canne.—The Duck and her Ducklings.—Rennes.—Dogs.—Enfer and Paradis.—Monk Lover.—The Ciseleur.

'Tis not antiquity, nor author
That makes Truth truth, although Time's daughter.
WALLER.

NOT far from Dinan, on the road to Rennes, is Evran, once a place of importance, and remarkable, in an historical point of view, as having formerly witnessed the treaty for the division of Bretagne between Charles de Blois and the Comte de Montford, in 1360; and interesting, from being the scene of the capture of Du Guesclin by the English, in 1352. But for these recollections one would pass through Evran without notice, as it has nothing to recommend it; all its antiquities are swept away, and the country round is flat, and suited to a battle, it presents, consequently, no picturesque

features. At some little distance, are the remains of the castle of the Beaumanoirs, where the celebrated hero of the combat of thirty resided.

Another castle excites interest in this neighbourhood, not so much from the remarkable ruins which are, however, fine, but from a singular legend which attaches to it, and which has something so extraordinary in its nature that it is worthy of attention, as another proof of the extent of superstitious belief in this part of the world.

It is currently believed throughout this district, that at a certain period the town of Montfort-sur-Meu has a miraculous visitation, and that the favoured spot is the church of St. Nicholas. It is not, however, the saint himself who comes from time to time to observe how his votaries are going on, for as there is scarcely a town in France where a church is not dedicated to him, the trouble would probably be too great. Neither is it any of the saints in the calendar who think proper to revisit this nether world, and shake the dispositions of the inhabitants "with thoughts beyond the reaches of their souls." It would be easy to lose oneself in conjecture amidst such a wide maze as the credulity of the Bretons leads to.

On the painted windows of the church of St.

Nicholas, on the banners of the same, and on most of the ornaments, carved at the foot of St. Nicholas's statue on the grand altar, indeed wherever the representation can be placed, is to be observed the forms of a *duck and her train of ducklings*. From time immemorial these characters have held a conspicuous figure in the annals of Montfort, and tradition recounts their history in these terms.

It happened once that a lord of the castle of Montfort became enamoured of a beautiful young girl, one of the peasants on his estate. As his professions, his offers, and his threats, had no effect upon her, he had recourse to the usual method with feudal tyrants in those Bluebeard days; and having carried her off, shut her up in solitary confinement in his castle till she became more amenable to order. The young peasant, however, not at all pleased with so violent a demonstration of affection, applied herself diligently to her prayers, and addressing her supplications particularly to St. Nicholas, who, it seems, amongst his numerous avocations, devotes his attention to the care of distressed damsels, she made him a solemn promise that if by his means she could escape from the tower in which she was confined, she would go every year to his

church at Montfort, and return him thanks publicly for the great service he had rendered her.

The saint, probably, considering the great importance to his fame which the propagation of such an instance of his power would be in so illustrious a commune as that of Montfort, lent a favourable ear to her prayers, and the result was, doubtless to her own astonishment, that she was enabled to fly out between the bars of her prison in the form of a wild duck, and soar away from her persecutor's sight. As there will always be various readings to every recorded fact, some persons whose ideas are prone to take a sublimer flight, have rejected this means of escape, and simply state that the object of the saint's solicitude was borne away miraculously from the tower, not saying one word about *the duck* at this stage of the affair.

It appears that her new mode of locomotion was not altogether easy to the young damsel, for she did not fly beyond the limits of the tyrant's jurisdiction, which would have been the most obvious mode of escaping entirely, but checked her flight too near the castle; by which, and indeed by what follows, it seems uncertain whether she had as yet felt the change from human to *feathered* nature; for it is told that having alighted on the ground, she was met by certain

ill-bred retainers of the Count, whose attentions were equally annoying; for her beauty was not, like that of the Irish saint, of a nature to secure her from impertinence, though she wandered from one extremity of the country to another.

Here, then, was a new perplexity, for the rude soldiers would not let her pass, and she might as well have remained in her tower as a prisoner in their hands. Again she bethought her of St. Nicholas, who had somewhat ungallantly left her half way in her difficulties, and seeing at a distance in a pond a party consisting of a duck and little ones, she vowed if he would assist her once again, to do as she had just before promised, or in case of her death, or the impracticability of her paying him that duty herself, she desired that every year those very animals then swimming about and cutting a thousand capers in the water, should be her deputies on the solemn occasion. It is to be imagined that her miraculous trip through the air had a little exalted her imagination, for what right she had to suppose that her mere command (not being a recognised saint) would produce such a result, is not recorded. However, St. Nicholas seems to have been in a very indulgent humour, and somehow or other he arranged that she should disappear from the soldiers who stopped her way.

But it so happened that before the end of the year the young girl died, without having been able to fulfil her vows to the saint: but she nevertheless kept her word, or rather the ducks did for her, and for several hundred years every May did these pious and exemplary animals devote themselves to the honour and glory of St. Nicholas, who being the patron of all aquatic things, had some claim on their own individual attention. The mother duck and her brood arrive at the church door when all the people are assembled, and *waddling* up the aisle *(en son movement)*, approach the altar, where, after having by various gestures expressed her devotion, followed in the same by all the ducklings, she waddles back again as she came, and, no one knows how, disappears.

> "How she came or whither she went,
> None could say and none could see!"

Several most respectable ecclesiastics, as well as a crowd of laymen, have given their testimony year after year to the mysterious appearance of these extraordinary animals, and works have been published more than once to prove the truth of the transaction; all the particulars of this well authenticated fact have been brought together in a pamphlet by M. Baron du Taya of Rennes,

a learned and most zealous antiquary, whose fondness for all the legends and precious monuments of his country is carried by him almost to an excess, even to allowing him to give a patient hearing to childish stories like the present. As whatever he treats, however, cannot fail of deriving interest from his manner of narrating the circumstances, the pages he has devoted to the Canne de Montfort will be read with pleasure by all who are so fortunate as to meet with his delightful pamphlets, the *Opuscules Bretons.*

This belief is not a mere obscure tradition among the peasants: besides the appearance at stated times of this miraculous duck having been entered in the registers of the parish of St. Nicholas de Montfort, she is gravely mentioned by Hay Duchatel in his life of Du Guesclin, and by D'Argentré in his "Histoire de Bretagne." Her visits after the first few years of the appearance were farther between, but still she came and still she was looked for: why public events should have any effect on superhuman visitations of this kind it is hard to say, but though in the memory of man the *canne* and her *cannetons* have been seen in the church of St. Nicholas, it is not advanced by any one that she has ventured to repeat her devotions since the period of the great French Revolution, and considering the present state of

things it is not probable that she will ever be seen by mortal eyes again.

The country round Rennes is not particularly interesting, and the town, though it has many very fine buildings, and is generally well constructed, has an air of gloom, which, perhaps, is more striking after having left the cheerful and picturesque scenes which delight one at Dinan. Great public works have been carried on there, and the greatest part of the old streets have been cleared away; to judge by what remains, it must have presented, formerly, some of the dirtiest, oldest, and narrowest in France. A new bridge is being built near the Musée, and all that neighbourhood is at present in a state of confusion not to be paralleled, for the population seems there the thickest, and the markets go on in the midst of bricks, stone, mortar, and workmen, and the washerwomen ply their unceasing trade, regardless of all that is going on around; so that to arrive at what we sought, the picture-gallery, was a service of no little danger, and what we found was certainly far from repaying us.

Most of the pictures, we were informed, were in the course of removal to the Hotel de Ville, what remained, offered little interest; several

rooms were hung with old-fashioned English engravings, which were exhibited to us as valuable works of art. Among a crowd of worthless paintings, I was struck with a finely executed, though hideous, representation of a large grinning mastiff of most ferocious appearance; and, expressing my opinion of its merits, our guide related to me a story so horrible, that I can only hope his native Breton love for the marvellous and the frightful inspired him, and that truth had little to do with it. He recounted that this portrait was that of the last of fourteen of those remarkably ferocious animals, who were regularly entertained by the town of Rennes as a protection. They were shut up during the day, and let loose to prowl about the streets all night as watchers; their howlings re-echoing through the squares and lanes like veritable Loup-garoux. For a series of years, these monsters were permitted to keep their horrible watch, and less than a century ago were in full force; but, at length, a party of strangers, not aware of the custom, were incautious enough to pass along the streets after the time when they were let loose, and being set upon by them, were all torn to pieces. This tragedy opened the eyes of the magistrates and towns-people to the danger of permitting such patrols, and the animals

were—not as one would naturally suppose, destroyed, but *dispersed*, sent to various parts of the country, and the portraiture of this worthy was painted as a memorial for the town. We could not help thinking that our disagreeable acquaintance of La Garaye must have been of this breed.

The public walks of Rennes, called Mont Thabor, are very fine, more so than almost in any town I have seen; long rows of magnificent old trees form the most beautiful groves, and lead to delightful promenades, from whence the views of the extensive, though flat, country are admirable. The Enfer and Paradis reminded us of the same arrangement at Stow, and extremely agreeable these retreats are. The Jardin des Plantes is good, and in a good situation; the column erected to the *Braves* of the Three Days is peculiarly rich and elegant, and has a fine effect. There is a large statue of Du Guesclin in one of the squares, but its size is its only merit. The Eveché and its gardens are fine, but present nothing antique, nor is there a church in Rennes of the slightest interest, which surprised us the more, as it is one of the oldest towns in Brittany, as well as formerly the capital. A magnificent fountain, in a very grand position, has been erected;

but, unfortunately, it is discovered too late that the water cannot be made to rise to the height required, and after great labour and expense, it remains unused and without utility. All the public buildings are on a peculiarly massive and extensive scale, and some of them exhibit admirable architecture.

The Salle de Spectacle is extremely grand, and the fine range of shops under its arcades have an imposing appearance. The Palaces are all large, and the surrounding houses well built: the Palais de Justice is a noble structure, and the interior halls spacious and fine; one Salle, in particular, preserves its original gilding and ornaments, which are in exquisite taste. The ceilings and panels are by Jouvenet, very elegantly imagined and executed; groups of the prettiest Cupids in the world chained together by glowing garlands, as fresh and flourishing as if just gathered. This room reminds one of several at the Palace of Fontainebleau, though not of equal antiquity with some of the finest there. The date of that we most admired was of 1670. The public library is rich in choice illuminated MSS., which, thanks to the kind courtesy of M. Baron du Taya, we were permitted to see, and to his polite attentions we owed a visit, after the usual hour, to the Hotel

de Ville. Our object in going there was to see a picture, of which we had heard much, painted by no other hand than that of *le bon Roi René*, the best illuminator of his day, as well as an encourager of chivalry and the fine arts. I grieve, however, to be obliged to confess that the extraordinary, dingy, black, mis-shapen *table* we beheld, gives but little idea of the royal troubadour's skill. The subject of the picture appears to be the Judgment of Solomon, but there are so many allegorical accompaniments, and the colouring is so completely faded, that it would be difficult to decide positively what the intention of the painter might have been.

There is a fine Rubens, in one of the halls, the subject, lions attacking travellers, and a few good modern pictures; amongst them, one which attracted our attention, more from its story than its execution; it is a legend of the Count de Comminges, who, unable to marry the lady of his love, entered the convent of La Trappe, and became celebrated for his piety: there was another brother of the community who was equally distinguished for holiness and goodness, and who remained an inmate of the same house for several years; at length he was attacked by a malady which no skill could avert, and he died. It was then, and then only, that

the real sex of the holy person was discovered, and the Count de Comminges recognised the Dame de ses Pensées. The moment chosen is that of her death, when he has thrown himself on her dead body in a fit of agonised despair — love triumphing over philosophy and religious resignation. It is touchingly told, and has considerable merit.

But that which excited our interest more than any other of the lions of Rennes was an introduction we obtained by means of our kind friend M. du Taya, whose fondness for art is only equalled by his devotion to the antiquities of his country and by his urbanity and goodness. There lives at Rennes, but little known beyond his own neighbourhood, a genius of a very high order, whose works require only to be seen by *connoisseurs* to be appreciated as they merit. He inhabits a little low house in one of the squares, and his modest window is filled with plates, locks, and barrels, indicating his occupation of gunsmith: you enter his small crowded shop, and behold a venerable-looking old man with an agreeable and very intelligent countenance, in an apron and cap, and busily engaged at his work. It is not difficult to get him upon his favourite topic, and he then enters with infinite spirit on the mysteries of his craft: a thousand little

drawers are opened, and minute pieces of carved and graved metal are produced destined to ornament pistols and guns of various kinds.

M. Gourjon, for so the artist is called, had employed several years of his life in the perfection of a work on which he lavished the greatest pains and trouble, and which called forth all the resources of his genius. This piece of sculpture, unique in its kind, was sent to Paris to be exhibited, but in the confusion of the Revolution of 1830 it was "spirited away," and all the fruit of years of anxiety was lost to the artist who had placed all his hopes of fame on its success. He has since reason to think this precious *fusil* has been purchased by an English gentleman in the Mauritius, who, if he is really the possessor of so great a treasure, should be aware that a pendant to the great work is at this moment occupying the attention of the sculptor, whose enthusiasm for his art no disappointment has been able to damp. It is melancholy, and at the same time inspiring, to see the fervour with which he works, conscious that he is executing that which he can scarcely hope to live to finish, but which he feels confident will secure his after fame and do honour to his memory. Nothing can exceed the delicacy and beauty of both his carving and engraving on wood, and steel

and silver: the subtlety of the allegories he introduces bearing upon the subject he undertakes to illustrate, are curious and breathe the spirit of a Cellini as much as his work resembles those of the great master.

Not a hidden opening, not a concealed spring in the mysterious gun but is covered with work of the most elaborate kind, *arabesqued* and *damascined* as if by the finger of a gnome, and at the same time with a boldness of design which is truly admirable. He has a son a rising artist, who is studying at Paris, and who has been employed on some pictures for the town hall of Rennes, particularly a portrait of Louis Philippe, which is remarkably good.

As a mere maker of ordinary firearms, Gourjon le Père is looked upon as an excellent workman, but his genius belongs to a much higher sphere of art, and one can but regret that he has not a wider field for his powers, and that his advanced age should have left so few years before him. We were infinitely gratified at our visit to his little shop, and left it impressed with feelings of admiration for his surprising achievements and pleasure at the evident gratification our praises gave to his kind patron who had taken us there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Nantes.—Tristan and Yseult.—Héloise.—The Duchess Anne.—Tomb of Francis II. of Brittany.—Castle.—Cardinal de Retz.—The Duchesse de Berri.—The city of Nantes.—Mary Stuart.—Madame de Sevigné.

HENRY IV. of France is said to have been extremely delighted with his stay of twenty-three days at the town of Nantes, when he granted the famous edict to the members of the Reformed church which was afterwards so fatally revoked. We were certainly not less charmed than the good Bearnais, for a more brilliant, cheerful, agreeable, or beautiful town can scarcely exist in France. Its elegant squares and houses, its well-arranged streets, magnificent shops, comfortable hotels, splendid quays, and public buildings, make it the very beau-ideal of all that is pleasant and desirable. I was so much impressed with its merits that I pronounced it at once to be another Paris without any of the

disadvantages of that gorgeous city, without its crowds, its dirt, or its confusion, with equal beauties and equal amusements; in fact, my admiration of this delightful capital of the Loire Inférieure knew no bounds, and until I have seen Bordeaux, which I understand resembles it, I shall continue to think it the finest city I have visited in France.

The great changes that have taken place have effaced many reminiscences which one would fain forget altogether, as to permit the mind to dwell for an instant on all the horrors committed here during the Reign of Terror, would destroy every pleasurable feeling. The waves of the Loire have swept over deeds too hideous to think of! Would that they were the waters of Lethe, for the honour of the French nation and for the sake of human nature!.

I endeavoured only to recal the poetical recollections of this beautiful place where each street teems with historical recollections, all exciting if not all agreeable: romance and poetry lend their charms to make every part full of novelty and interest. Here is the closing scene of one of the most touching of the stories of the Table Ronde: on these quays was proclaimed by the sound of trumpets the death of Tristan de Leonois, the unfortunate lover of the beautiful Yseult,

whose snowy sail came down the Loire from the sea, when she obeyed his last entreaty, although, betrayed by jealousy, she came too late. Thus sings the bard who has recorded their love and their fate in that moving episode, which is, perhaps, the most pathetic in any language, and which partakes so strongly of the sadness which pervades all the charming legends of romantic Bretagne.

TRISTAN AND YSEULT.

Tristan was the nephew of Marc, the aged King of Cornouailles, who, desirous of marrying Yseult, the beautiful daughter of Arguis, King of Ireland, was incautious enough to despatch the handsomest and most accomplished knight of his time to fetch the bride. It appears that the father of Yseult had provided a charmed potion, which he, with equal incaution, gave to the charge of Tristan, desiring him to see that Yseult partook of it with her intended husband, in order that she might feel the affection for him which the disparity of their years might otherwise render doubtful. Unfortunately, the nephew of King Marc forgot his duty on the voyage, and yielding entirely to a violent passion he had conceived for his beautiful aunt elect, he induced her to divide the contents of the charmed vial with him, and thus their love became mutual.

A series of misfortunes then became their lot; separations, jealousies, and despair. Tristan was banished from his uncle's court, Yseult confined and persecuted, and their lives made miserable. The daughter of Hoël, King of little Bretagne, afterwards falling in love with Tristan, she did all in her power to estrange his affections from Yseult la Blonde; some accounts say he was married to her; at all events it is recorded that as he lay at Nantes, dying of wounds received in battle, his love for the wife of King Marc returned in all its fervour, and his faithful squire, who knew his secret thoughts, proposed setting out to Cornouailles to entreat his lady love to visit her knight for the last time. Accordingly, he departed, and it was agreed between them that if she consented to come, a white sail was to be hoisted in her vessel — if not, he was to put up a black one. A damsel whom the anxious Tristan set to watch, being bribed by Yseult aux Blanches mains, the daughter of Hoël, reported falsely what she saw, and the unfortunate lover expired, conceiving that he was deserted at his last moments. Meantime, La Blonde Yseult had not lost a moment, but had instantly set out with the squire, and a white sail had been hoisted to announce her approach. She landed, and the first news she heard was, that all was over; the ballad tells the rest.

THE LEGEND.

" Maiden, look forth! far over the sea
Does not a white sail gleam?
Comes not Yseult and life to me,
Or was it a fever'd dream?"

" I look far hence, tow'rds the foaming main,
But no bark, no sail appears:
Turn thee to rest, brave knight, again,
And dry those fruitless tears.
Deem not Yseult yon storm would brave
For him who has ceased to be her slave."

" Maiden, 'tis true, since the fatal hour
When together we quaff'd the charmed bowl,
Years are past, and gone is the power
That bound us both in sweet control,
But in our hearts there lingers yet
One drop that bids us never forget.
Though time and absence and fate combine,
The tenderest thought of her soul is mine,
Never, to love like ours, is known
Oblivion, save in death alone!
Oh! to see that snow-white sail
Would more than the leech's art avail—
Look forth once more for the blessed sight
For these eyes are closing fast in night."

" A bark comes onward before the gale,
But no white banner is waving there,
Black is the pennon, and black the sail
The colours of despair!
Turn thee, knight, to rest again,
Thou sigh'st for Yseult la Blonde in vain!"

Then Tristan turn'd with a deadly sigh
And clasp'd his hands in agony,
To Heaven his failing eyes he threw
And murmur'd faintly a last adieu.
" Yseult !—is it thus we sever !
My love !—my life !—adieu for ever ! "

Along the shore is a mournful cry ;
The crowded streets to the notes reply,
Widely spreads the solemn sound,
" Tristan of the Table Round,
A brave, a noble spirit is fled,
The flower of chivalry is dead ! "

* * * * *
* * * * *

Ah ! trait'rous maid, that snow-white sail
Should have told another tale.
Oh ! had it gleam'd to Tristan's sight
His soul had linger'd in its flight,
But—past the stern decree of Fate—
Fair Yseult reach'd the shore—too late !
She heard the tidings so loud, so dread,
No word she spoke, no tear she shed,
But the flush died from her lovely brow
And left it pale and cold as snow.
She hurried to the couch where lay
The spiritless, unconscious clay,—
Upon the yet unsettled face
Of pain and grief was left the trace,
As parting life's convulsive thrill
Sat on the pallid features still.
She gazed on that cold, passive brow,
And felt that all was ended now ;
All their past life of love and care,
Their vain, wild dreams—extinguish'd there !

One sigh, one long deep mournful tone
Told that the heart's sad task was done,
Its weakness and its misery o'er,
And lovely Yseult was no more!

Nantes is also the scene of sorrows less apocryphal, for here resided for a time the unfortunate lovers, Héloise and Abaylard, who have been the subject of the poet in many climes and ages, and are not forgotten in Bretagne; but in the popular songs of their country, the view taken of their pursuits has a far different character to that usually adopted. What will the reader to whom the sweet name of the lovely abbess suggests the image of all that is charming, sad, and pure — what will he say, when he finds her described in a poem, at or near her own time, as one of those "secret black and midnight hags," whose occupation is "a deed without a name!"

While the few brief hours of her fleeting happiness glided away amongst the shades of Pallet, and the "rocks and caverns" of Clisson; while the wedded lovers were forgetting, in the delight of each other's society, the science that had betrayed them into tenderness, and the learning which was creating round them the bitterest hate of envy — their innocent pleasures were changed by malignity into wickedness; that

knowledge the " cause of all their bliss and all their woe," was represented as leading to results most sacrilegious and impure and dangerous. Nothing less than magic could be attributed to students, learned beyond their age, beyond their fellow-beings. In such a night of ignorance, surrounded by foes, who sought every occasion to injure and to crush him, who had put their sages to shame, and had laughed at the learning of their schools—who had seen too clearly the errors, and exposed too severely the weakness and wickedness of the ministers of a perverted creed — can it be wondered at that vulgar opinion had decided on condemning them, and that the people, without hesitation, joined in any cry against those placed so immeasurably above them?

The extraordinary poem here given, is a curious mixture of sublimity and extravagance, simplicity and bombast. In the opinion of M. de la Villemarqué, it appears that Héloise was already the abbess of the Paraclete, when it was composed, as she not only was permitted to read the Gospels, but to consecrate the host, a privilege only allowed to the superior of a convent.

There is a curious confusion in the poet's mind of ancient and comparatively modern tradition: he attributes to Héloise the superhuman power

of the Druidesses, well known on the banks of the Loire by their fearful songs, which could raise storms, and drive the waters before them — who could predict the future, and were mistresses of the present. Poor Héloise has not only their attributes, and those of an alchymist, but is degraded to a mere ordinary witch, and made to change her human form into the semblance of the vilest animals. Like Merlin,* she knows

* Merlin, the enchanter, is the great hero of the Bretons, as he is of the Welsh; the same legends being common to both people. Among other lays respecting him, is the following, popular in Cornouaille.

MERLIN THE ENCHANTER.

" Merlin! Merlin! whither bound
With your black dog by your side?"—
" I seek until the prize be found,
Where the red egg loves to hide.

" The red egg of the sea-snake's nest†
Where the ocean caves are seen,
And the cress that grows the best
In the valley fresh and green.

† The *red egg of the sea-snake* was a powerful talisman, whose virtue nothing could equal; it was to be worn round the neck.

The *golden herb* is a medicinal plant; the peasants of Bretagne hold it in great esteem, and say that it shines, at a distance, like gold. If any one tread it under foot, he falls asleep, and can understand the language of dogs, wolves, and birds. This simple is supposed to be rarely met with, and only at

the power of simples; she boasts, in the poem, of the same wisdom as that vaunted as his by the Druid bard Taliesin, in the sixth century; in fact, she seems, in her own person, to unite all the dangerous and fearful love that ever existed in any age. She, whose beauty and whose learning were her only spells, more fatal to herself than to the world!

"I must find the golden herb,
And the oak's high bough must have,*
Where no sound the trees disturb
Near the fountain as they wave."

"Merlin! Merlin! turn again!
Leave the oak-branch where it grew,
Seek no more the cress to gain,
Nor the herb of gold pursue.
Nor the red egg of the snake
Where amid the foam it lies,
In the cave where billows break;
Leave those fearful mysteries.
Merlin, turn! to God alone
Are such fatal secrets known!"

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daybreak. In order to gather it, a privilege only granted to the devout, it is necessary to be *en chemise*, and with bare feet. It must be torn up, not cut. Another way is to go with naked feet, in a white robe, fasting, and without using a knife, gather the herb by slipping the right hand under the left arm, and letting it fall into a cloth, which can only be used once.

* The *high oak bough* is, perhaps, the mistletoe. The voice which warns Merlin may be intended for that of Saint Colombar, who is said to have converted Merlin. The poem is of high antiquity.

HELOISE ET ABAYLARD.

LEGEND OF CORNOUAILLE.

When I left the house of my father I was only twelve years old—when I followed my beloved student, my dear Abaylard.

When I went to Nantes with my dear student, Heaven can tell I knew no language but Breton.

All I knew, O my God! was to say my prayers when I was at home, little, in my father's house.

But now I am learned—very learned in all lore. The language of the Franks, and Latin, I know—and I can read and write well.

Yes, I can read in the book of the Gospels and write and speak and consecrate the host as well as the priests.

And when the priest says mass I know what will circumvent him—and I can tie the mystic knot in the middle and at the two ends.

I can find pure gold in the midst of ashes, and silver in sand—if the means are in my power.

I can change my form into that of a black bitch* or a raven when I will, or into the wild fire of the marsh, or into a dragon.

* At the foot of Mont St. Michel in Cornouaille, extends a wide marsh. If the mountaineer sees in the dusk of the evening a tall man, thin and pale, followed by a black bitch, whose

I know a song will rive the heavens asunder—make the deep sea howl and the earth tremble.

Yes, I know all that can be known on earth—all that has been—all that shall be.

My beloved and I made a compound together—it was the first I learnt to make; the eye of a raven and the heart of a toad were part of it.

And we added the seed of the green fern gathered a hundred feet down in the bottom of a well, and we found the root of the golden herb and tore it up in the meadow where it grew.

At sunrise we tore it from the ground, our heads uncovered and our feet bare.

The first time I proved the power of my compound was in the field of rye which belonged to the lord abbot.

The abbot had sown eighteen measures—he reaped but two handfuls!

I have at my father's house at home a coffer of silver: whosoever opens it let him beware!

There are in it three vipers who are hatching

steps are directed towards the marsh, he hurries home, shuts and locks the door of his cottage, and throws himself on his knees to pray, for he knows that the tempest is approaching. Soon after the winds begin to howl, the thunder bursts forth in tremendous peals, the mountain trembles to its base,—that is the moment when the magician evokes the souls of the dead.—VILLEMARQUE, *Barzas Breiz.*

a dragon's egg. If my dragon sees the light, great will be the desolation that follows!

With what do I nourish them? 'Tis not with the flesh of partridges—'tis not with the flesh of woodcocks—oh, no! 'tis with the blood of innocents I feed them.

The first I killed was in the churchyard—it was about to receive baptism—the priest was standing ready in his robes.

They took the babe to its grave. I took off my shoes and, softly, softly I unburied it—quietly —none heard my footstep.

If I remain on earth—my Light and I together; if we stay in this world one year or two.

Two years, if we stay, or three—my dear student and I—the world shall be no longer in its place!

Beware! beware! Loïza—beware of thy soul —if this world be thine own—the next belongs to God!

The first object of interest and curiosity is the cathedral: from the period of its first construction in 555, it has been considered as of extreme beauty, and deserves its high reputation. The choir was almost the only remain of the original building, as it has been renewed and rebuilt many times, but that no longer exists. The prin-

cipal portal is richly ornamented with delicate and elaborate carvings, representing scenes from the New Testament, with labels beneath the groups explaining the subjects. A great deal has been destroyed, but enough remains to dazzle the eye with their quantity and the perfection of their execution. It seems as though the stone under the sculptor's hand had been clay, so easy appears the work and so minute the details! The two square towers of the chief façade are one hundred and seventy feet high: the interior vault of the roof is bold and fine, and the height of the nave is one hundred and twelve feet; but beautiful as it is, it is imperfect, two aisles being wanting, and the choir incomplete. But the treasure of the whole is the exquisite *tomb*, which alone is worth a pilgrimage to see, and which is hailed with the greater pleasure as so very few remain in any of the churches in France. This almost miraculously escaped in the general destruction at the Revolution, and has been restored in a manner to leave nothing to desire. It formerly stood in the church of the Carmelites, and was concealed by being lowered through the broken pavement into a cellar, where it was hidden by rubbish. It contained the bodies of Francis II, Duke of Brittany, and his two wives, Marguerite de Foix and Marguerite de Bretagne,

together with the heart of his daughter, the Duchess Anne, enclosed in a heart of gold. This golden heart is surmounted by a crown of gold with *fleur-de-lis* surrounded by a cordelière. On the circle of the crown are these letters in crimson enamel, between each word a stop enamelled green.

Cueur . de . vertus . orne .
Dignement . couronne .

Below the crown and on the heart is written on one side similarly enamelled.

En : ce : petit : vaisseau :
De : fin : or : pur : et : munde :
Repose ; ung : plus : grande : cueur :
Que : onque : dame : eut : av : munde :
Anne : fut : le : nom : delle :
En : France : deux : fois : roine :
Duchesse : des : Bretons :
Royale : et : Sovveraine :
C
M.VXIII.

On the other side :

Ce : cueur : fut : si : tres : hault :
Que : de : la : terre : aux : cieulx :
Sa : vertu : liberalle :
Accroissoit : mieulx : et : mieulx :
Mais : Dieu : en a : reprins :
Sa : portion : meilleure :
En : grand : dueil : nous : demeure :
IX Janvier.

Above in the middle of the crown is an M enamelled in green and adhering in the middle to the cordelière.

The tomb is of white, black, and red marble, raised five feet, and placed upon a base of white marble. On the tomb repose two statues of the natural size; those of Francis, and of Marguerite de Foix, his second wife; three angels support their heads with cushions, a lion and a dog sustain their feet. At the four corners of the tomb are four figures standing, the size of life, representing the cardinal virtues, with their attributes.

The statue of Justice presents the features of Anne de Bretagne, the costume, and all the details of dress most exquisitely given: the character of the head is fine, the forehead high and open, and the whole combines majesty with feminine modesty.

The twelve apostles are placed round in niches of red marble: St. Francois d'Assise, and St. Marguerite, the patron saints of the duke and duchess, are at the head of the tomb, and at the feet are Charlemagne and St. Louis.

Round the base are sixteen figures, whose faces and hands are in white marble, and the rest black; these are mourners, and are placed in niches; a few of them are slightly mutilated,

but no other part of this precious work of art is injured. It was sculptured in 1507, by Michel Columb, a native of Nantes, and is, probably, one of the finest mausoleums in Europe.

The Swiss who shows the tomb, appears an enthusiastic admirer of its beauties, and seems to grudge no time nor pains that strangers may have every opportunity of minutely examining every part in every possible light. He was one of the first instances, and may be considered a type of the civility and cheerful good-humour of the Nantais, who are, without exception, the most agreeable people of any town in France.

The castle was constructed in the year 930, and was called successively by the names of Tour-Neuve, and Château de Saint Hermine. Francis II, and afterwards the Duke de Mercœur, greatly augmented it. The latter built two bastions and a rampart, sculptured on which is still seen his double cross of Lorraine. It was from this bastion that the Cardinal de Retz, confined in the château by order of the king, escaped, in 1665. The particulars of this escape are curious.

Every evening the Cardinal was in the habit of taking the air on one of the platforms of the castle which looks over the Loire. The day agreed on for his attempted escape, an abbé, who was his friend, came, bringing with him, under

his robe, a rope and a thong; the rest of his friends stationed themselves beneath the bastion, feigning to have brought their horses to water at the pond; but as in this position they could not see the place where the prisoner was to descend, they stationed a priest in a meadow on the opposite side of the river, who was to throw his hat three times in the air when he had ascertained that the Cardinal had effected his descent.

When de Retz and his attendants were assembled as usual on the bastion, about eight o'clock in the evening, he pretended to feel thirsty, and sent one of his people to fetch wine; he drank a glass, after which, those in his confidence made signs to the guards that they should empty the bottle, and appearing to dread their master's perceiving them, they drew it behind a tower, and began to drink. Meantime, the Cardinal hastily divested himself of his red robe, which he placed on a stick between two turrets, so that if the sentinels had glanced that way, they would have imagined him to be engaged in his usual occupation of observing the promenaders on the Motte Saint Pierre. He then had himself tied round by the cord, and fixing the thong, he swung himself over the battlements, and his people lowered him down the tremendous wall. At the sight of this fearful manœuvre, the priest sta-

tioned opposite was so terrified that he lost all presence of mind, and forgetting to throw up his hat, he fled away from the spot with all speed. His friends, however, perceived that the Cardinal had contrived to reach the ground, and hastening towards him, mounted him on a horse, which, proving too skittish for him, threw him on the pavement. This accident attracted many persons to the spot, and his people were obliged to use much exertion to prevent his being recognized and surrounded: they placed him on another horse, which he sat with infinite difficulty, for his shoulder was dislocated, and he was in extreme pain and perplexity. At length, he found himself in a boat, where the Duke de Brissac, and the Chevalier de Sevigné were waiting for him; they lost no time in continuing their flight, and sometimes on the river, sometimes on horseback, he arrived, at the end of four hours, at the château de Beaupreau, where the Duchess de Brissac received him, though it was this very lady whom he had formerly endeavoured to carry off, with the project of marrying her in Holland. He was afterwards enabled to escape to Rome, where he was at length secure.

The famous and beloved Duchess Anne was born in the château of Nantes, and passed her earliest years there, and within these walls her

marriage with Louis XII. was celebrated with extraordinary pomp, in 1499.

A modern event of some interest attracts the attention of the stranger to the château, and a house in the street opposite the principal entrance. It was here that, in 1832, the Duchess de Berry was concealed in the extraordinary place from which she was taken, to be conducted to more commodious apartments in the castle. We had the curiosity to visit the rooms where she was hidden, and could, with difficulty, imagine the possibility of four persons remaining for more than twelve hours in such a position.

At the top of the antique built house, beneath the shelving roof, is a small chamber with a fire-place, the back of which opens, by a small square door, hardly large enough to admit a cat, into a *cachette*, eighteen inches wide at one end, and only from eight to ten at the other, the length may be about three feet and a half; the height diminishes almost to a point, at the narrowest part, so that it is with difficulty a man can stand in this corner; yet here, scorched and pressed, and almost suffocated, remained these unfortunate people for so great a length of time. When they were obliged to betray themselves, the heat of the fire, which the soldiers had lighted, becoming intolerable, the Duch-

ess's gown was scorched from top to bottom, and, in a few minutes more, she must have been in flames. It appears that the terrified astonishment of the guards, on hearing the voices within, and the kicks which were necessary to force open the swollen iron plate, was such that they lost all power of assisting the prisoners, as they emerged, in pitiable plight, from the frightful place they had chosen for concealment. Doubtless, this *cachette* had often served, during the troubled periods of the religious wars, as a place of shelter to other fugitives, whose cause for enduring so desperate a danger might have been more positive than that of the little would-be heroine, who so unnecessarily exposed herself and her friends to perils which might have been avoided. Her capture seemed to excite more risibility than pity or alarm, in most minds, and but little sympathy attended her, though, before she so strangely forgot all prudence or consideration, she had always been a favourite with the people, not only at Nantes, but throughout France.

The situation of Nantes is very agreeable, at the extremity of immense meadows, bordered with coteaux, covered with vines, and seated on the right bank of the Loire, which is here divided into several branches. The superb quays extend

half a league along the river, covered with vessel of all kinds. Though there appears much bustle and commerce, unlike almost all other French towns, all is neat, and clean, and well-ordered, the walks shaded with fine trees, the bridges and the islands present a *coup d'œil* of great brilliancy and beauty. The place Graslin, the Place Royale, and the Boulevards are, perhaps, the finest parts of the city, where all is worthy of admiration. There is no end to the fine views from the promenades and bridges, and the streets themselves, well paved and beautifully built, are a treat to walk in, the shops are gay and brilliant, and the people uniformly obliging.

One of the most ancient parts of the town is the Place du Bouffay, formerly a *champ clos*; it was here that, in 1386, took place the famous duel between Robert de Beaumanoir and the Sire de Tournemine, the particulars of which have been already told in the account of Dinan and the village of Lehon.

When it is considered that from Nantes to Ingrande, an extent of eleven leagues only, there are no less than one hundred and thirty-two islands of sand, great and small, and again, from Nantes to Paimbœuf no fewer than sixty, some idea may be formed of the encumbered state of

this river, which, in many parts, is nearly choked up, as we had too much occasion to observe. Here, where it is so near the sea, and where several other rivers increase its waters, the Loire is far from presenting, in summer, an imposing effect, though, after we had seen it in other parts of its course, we looked back upon its appearance at Nantes as quite magnificent in comparison. It is true that there are many fine points where the tide looks full and grand, and where its winding way amongst its rich meadows can be followed with admiration, but, on the whole, the first view of the far-famed Loire disappoints an eye accustomed to the varied beauty and magnificence of the Thames.

It was at Nantes that the unfortunate Mary Stuart first set her foot on French ground, then a mere child, and made acquaintance with a country to which she became so strongly attached, in quitting which she left behind all her happiness, as her prophetic tears had told, when she looked from the deck of the vessel that carried her to a bleak, unfriendly shore, where harshness and cruelty awaited her.

At Nantes the witty Madame de Sevigné made the short visit which she describes with her usual vivacity, when she was sojourning in that Bretagne, the names of whose great fami-

lies so much amused and astonished her Parisian ears. "I arrived," says she, "at nine o'clock in the evening, at the foot of that immense castle which you well know, at the very spot where our Cardinal escaped. Our little bark paused — 'Who goes there?' was the demand. I had my answer all ready, and, presently, from the little postern door, issued forth M. de Lavardin, with five or six torch-bearers before him, accompanied by several noblemen, who hastened forward to present me their hands and received me in the most gallant style. I am assured that, from the middle of the river, this scene must have had a very imposing effect, and, no doubt, gave a very exalted idea of my consequence to my boatmen."

CHAPTER XIX.

Clisson.—The Young Nightingales.—*Nod ust.*—Pictures.—The Heiress of Kéroulaz.

It was quite impossible that anything could be more exquisitely beautiful than the sun rise by which we set out from our superb inn in the Place Graslin to the Place Neptune, from whence our little carriage was to start for Clisson at six o'clock. All the quays and the river, the Isle Gloriette and the bridges were painted with the colours of a cathedral window and glowing in the golden light of a sun whose brilliant promise made us look forward to a lovely day; truly did the treacherous orb come forth

> Flatt'ring the mountain tops with sov'reign eye,
> Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
> Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.

But, while we stood waiting for more than an

hour and a half, till all the possible and probable passengers should be assembled, the brilliant hues began to die away, and grey clouds to succeed them.

This system of loitering is so common throughout France, that it might answer to advise a traveller never to be at the appointed place till an hour at least after that named for starting; but, as the diligence sometimes leaves an hour *sooner* than its time, there is no rule, right or wrong, by which to be guided. Surrounded by a party of good-humoured people, we paraded the place for some time, observing a variety of amusing traits; one young passenger was particularly occupied in his attention to a small basket, about which he evidently wished to be questioned; we, therefore, gratified him, and inquired its contents. This was what he had been waiting for; so, with a very sagacious air, he untied a coloured handkerchief, opened the basket, and exhibited a nest of young nightingales, which were, he informed us, his particular care; and which he proceeded to feed, to the evident edification of all the attendants in the coach-office, including the chief clerk, who laid down his pen and watched the process with infinite interest.

In the midst of all the confusion of places

booking, baggage weighing, and passengers arriving, our friend continued to expatiate on the habits, customs, and manners of his unfledged charge; assuring us that he knew every shade of care necessary to secure the well-being of the whole race of nightingales, many of whom owed their existence to him. In his enthusiasm, he almost mistook the coach by which he was about to travel to Poitiers; and, with many jokes on his own *étourderie*, and more last words on the education of nightingales, he disappeared, and we went our way across several more bridges, and through an interminable faubourg, on the road to the far-famed Clisson, where we were to see the identical spots where Heloise and her "doux clerc" had strayed, and the "grotte" where they had reposed.

Here we first began to see the vines; but, as the country is not pretty, their effect was considerably diminished. We passed Pallet and the ruins of its castle, where Abelard is said to have been born, and arrived at Clisson after descending a very rugged and steep hill. After a short pause, we procured a guide to the castle, and spent some time amongst the extensive ruins, which are very fine, though too near the town to be altogether as tranquil as one could wish.

The castle stands on an eminence, with the pretty, full, clear rivers of Sèvres and Moine beneath, which join their waters at its feet; the small town appears close under the ruined windows, and its shabby buildings and ugly roofs are too clearly visible; beyond, however, following the windings of the charming rivers, the landscape is extremely pretty. Several of the courts of the castle are ornamented naturally with fine trees of various growth, and a profusion of clematis mixes with the ivy on the walls, and falls in graceful festoons over the slender shafts of the pillars, and broken stone-work of the windows.

There is a range of dungeons, the most conspicuously perfect part of the building, one vying with the other in horror, till a series of *oubliettes* of the most appalling description fills up the measure of astonishment and disgust that such things should have been. Some of the worst of the dungeon chambers were used as prisons during the Revolution, and the evidences of instruments of execution confirm the report of horrors committed there during the fatal war of La Vendée. The Great Constable lived in times when these receptacles for malefactors appear to have been needed, and certainly there is no lack of the means of wholesome correction

in any of the castles of the period any more than in his own.

We proceeded from these interesting walls to the celebrated walks of La Garenne; a large space of ground, to which Nature has given great beauty, and which art has cherished to such a degree, that these promenades have become celebrated throughout Europe. As they are situated seven leagues from Nantes, they are too far off to be quite enjoyed by the inhabitants; and, as there are not many towns or villages near, they are in a great manner lost, which may account for considerable neglect prevailing hereabouts at the present time: several beautiful sites, where fine villas have been constructed, are now deserted, and sadness and neglect prevail where once all was animation and cheerfulness.

Clisson has been called the French Tivoli; but it must be confessed, although it has many beauties, that it does not deserve so complimentary a title, which must have been bestowed on it by those who not only have never seen Italy, but have not wandered amongst the Bocages and Vaux of Normandy and Brittany. In fact, the scenery here is tame and spiritless in comparison; but, taken by itself, it is a charming retreat — the walks laid out with taste, every

advantage taken of the fine rocks, piled sometimes in heaps, and sometimes rising in solitary masses amidst the thick wood—here and there a graceful temple crowns a height, and looks down on a pleasing vale or a deep grove.

The clear river murmurs along between fresh willowy banks, starred occasionally with little islands, covered with acacia and weeping birch. Statues and obelisks peep out from the trees at the extremity of serpentine walks, and arcades of vine invite by their chequered shade. Inscriptions on the rocks appear at distances, amongst which are the lines of Delille, so often quoted:

O! limpide rivière! O rivière cherie!

But there is too much art for nature, and too much nature for art in this pretty miniature of Italian scenery. We, however, roamed about, well satisfied, for some hours, till we found that the shower which had caused us to take shelter, first in a Grecian temple and then in the Grotte d'Heloise, was increasing to a perfect deluge; and at length we became aware that the thick foliage which had at first sheltered us as we advanced, now sent down new torrents on our heads, that the water from the numerous pines coloured all our habiliments with iron stains, and that a perfect river was under

our feet, while thunder and storm were struggling above us.

We, therefore, made the best of our way back to our village inn, where we found most of our travelling companions already driven in by the rain, and occupying themselves in the only way which the place offered, namely, in endeavouring to make a dinner of slender and bad materials. Several *chaûfferettes* being pressed into the service to dry the dripping feet of many of the party, something like content began to prevail. We had observed the uneasy movements of a stout elderly gentleman, who, together with his wife, a remarkably dingy-complexioned person, appeared to be thoroughly *ennuyés*. After sundry visits, first to the garden, then to the street-door, in a vain hope that the deluge would abate a little of its fury after three hours, he seemed resolved on making acquaintance with us to relieve the torments of *le spleen*, which nothing seemed likely to dissipate. It could only have been the chance of finding something comic in our insular manners which could have driven him to this, for our faces were as rueful as his own. The next time we wandered listlessly to the open door, and gazed vacantly into the overflowed court, where stood our tantalizing vehicle, whose destination for Nantes was

not till five o'clock, he addressed us in the following phrase, accompanying his words with a very meaning smile and jocose expression, which seemed to indicate that more was meant than met the ear: "Nod ust!"

We were considerably confused, feeling that our classical knowledge was quite incompetent to meet that of our new acquaintance; but he quieted our fears by continuing his remarks in the same language, which we presently discovered to be English, and found that the cabalistic words he had used were intended as a piece of English waggery, and a comic congratulation on our not being annoyed during our journey by the *dust*. He told us that, though he had in some measure forgotten his English, which he once knew perfectly, having lived in America, his wife was quite a countrywoman of ours, and he proceeded to beg her to prove his assertion, which request she complied with by sundry grunts and sputterings perfectly unintelligible, but of which he appeared excessively proud. As we found afterwards that this "dark ladye" was looked upon as an English woman at the inn, *because* she could not speak French, we were rather puzzled to imagine in what dialect she indulged her husband with that charming conversation which must have so

much pleased him; some remarks of his, however, respecting calabashes and bananas, cleared up the mystery, and we set our new countrywoman down for a native of the "Isles that gem the western main."

When the hour arrived for returning to Nantes, to our consternation we observed that our vehicle, instead of awaiting us at the door of the inn, drove very peaceably out of the yard, the rain still increasing in violence, and we found that it was expected that all the passengers, of whom there were many, would walk up the steep hill, as the slipperiness of the pavement, added to the weight of the carriage, was more than the horses were able to manage. This was accommodating *le monde* in a new way, but it was in vain to expostulate. Accordingly, a train of persons followed the carriage nearly a quarter of a league, some with umbrellas, others exposed to the pelting of the pitiless storm, while the *conducteur* walked gaily on, whistling as briskly as if we were all promenading for our own amusement. Thoroughly wet and tired, we were at length permitted to mount the diligence, and were obliged to confess, that considering the steepness and state of the road, had we all got in before, we should, probably, have been at the bottom of the hill all night.

By the time we reached Nantes, the wind had risen to a perfect hurricane,—Heloise herself must have been abroad; the thunder was more frequent, and the flashes of continued lightning gleaming through the pouring rain, lighted us to our coach-office, where we were welcomed with shouts of laughter; in spite, however, of all this hilarity and familiarity, nothing could exceed the good-humoured civility with which we were attended, the quickness with which a fiacre was found for us, and the care with which we were sent off to our hotel, where, after mounting several long flights of stairs, and threading the mazes of a hundred passages, we happily found ourselves in our own rooms, astonished at the escape we had had from drowning, and quite ready to agree with our facetious friend, that one journey to the groves of Clisson had been accomplished with "Nod-ust."

The picture gallery of Nantes is not only of the first order as to the precious works of art it encloses, but their arrangement is so admirable, that it excels that of any other I ever saw. A splendid suite of rooms, lighted with the best taste, and built in the most convenient manner, exhibits a series of magnificent pictures, all in fine preservation, and many, not only valuable, but interesting. Amongst others, there are se-

veral portraits by Janet, of the children of Henri II, the most charming specimens of the master, finished with great care, yet so bold and spirited that they would not disgrace the pencil of Velasquez. A St. Catharine pointing to an inscription, by A. Caracci, is a perfect gem; and a curiosity which excites much interest, is a *painting* by Canova, a portrait of a Crusader, given by him to the French minister, M. Cacault, at Rome, in 1803. It is finely drawn, and the head has great expression, but the colouring is singular, and rather confused.

One of the finest, and most characteristic portraits I have seen of Queen Elizabeth, is here. The painter is unknown, but it is worthy of the first master of the art. To great delicacy of detail both breadth and force are joined, and there is so much individuality in the countenance, that it convinces the beholder the likeness must have been perfect. The dress is really beautiful, much less exaggerated than Elizabeth's usual costume appears: the hair is dressed "in plaits, and in tresses, both comely and fair;" it is of a rich auburn, evidently curling naturally, having no ornament but that formed by the "odd-conceited" tresses twisted round and round the head; a bunch of crimson carnations adorns one side, and falls down on the cheek quite in the

fashion of the present day. A gold gauze ruff and frill, striped, surrounds the throat, but is so thin that the form is seen beneath. The jewels on the dress shine out wonderfully, and the rings on the finely-shaped hands are exquisitely managed. But the genius, command, strong sense, and firmness of the countenance, rivet the attention; though not handsome, there is a character about the intellectual face which attracts at once, and tells histories of the mind which animated it; there is a play about the mouth, indicative of more than ordinary wit and humour, and the clear, pale, grey eye, is full of meaning. I scarcely ever saw a portrait from which a character could so well be described, and I could not but envy the museum of Nantes, possessing a picture which ought to be in England. Another attractive picture, is that of Diana of Poitiers; it is extremely good, but whether a likeness or not, it is difficult to determine, as we afterwards saw many others, all as unlike each other as the portraits of Mary Stuart herself.

Bacon says, justly, "The best part of beauty is that which a picture cannot express."

We now took leave of Bretagne, but, before the reader quits these romantic shores, he must not refuse his sympathy with the sorrows of the unfortunate heiress who is the heroine of the

following popular ballad, sung frequently in snatches by the peasants on the banks of the Loire, which will now be our scene.

THE HEIRESS OF KÉROULAZ.

The history of Marie de Kéroulaz, only daughter of François de Kéroulaz, knight, and Lord of Kéroulaz, in Bas-Léon, and of the Lady Catherine de Lannuzouarn, is a melancholy one. Married by her mother, against her inclination, in 1565, to François du Chastel, Marquis de Mesle, who was preferred to two young lords of the country, named Kerthomaz and Salaün, whose attentions she had been allowed publicly to receive, the unfortunate heiress died of grief, shortly after her marriage.

The Marquis de Mesle does not hold a very honourable or distinguished place in the history of Bretagne. It is recounted by Dom. Morice that, during the wars of the League, at the taking of Kemperlé, of which place he was governor, he fled in the night, with several women, passed the river and escaped to his manor of Kastelgall, where he concealed himself. Popular tradition adds to this trait of cowardice, several facts proving his sordid avarice: all these qualities were not likely to overcome the aversion of the devoted Mary for the husband forced upon her.

At Landelo, a few leagues from Cartraix, is still to be seen the statue of the Marquis de Mesle; he was short, fat, and ugly; he is represented with the puffed hair and armour of the time of Louis XIII. His *three pillars of justice* are in the neighbourhood, and farther on are the ruins of his château, which have been bought, and are now inhabited by peasants. The castle appears to have been a fine one, but not strong; its position is on the summit of a mountain, at the foot of which is a river, the whole scene extremely picturesque; great part of the principal building has been destroyed. The gardens round are desolate, overgrown with briers, fox-glove, white thorn, and antique bushes of box, probably contemporary with the heiress; the avenues and the woods have all been cut down.

Marie de Kéroulaz and her sorrows are forgotten now in the country; all that is remembered is of the Marquis, his avarice, and his cowardice. But the names of Kerthomaz and Salaün are still held in esteem.

M. de Villemarqué mentions having met a few years ago on the road from Kemper to Douarnenez, a tall handsome-looking peasant, about forty years of age, wearing the wide plaited trowsers of the canton, and with his fair long hair floating over his shoulders; he was driving

a pair of oxen to the fair. Struck with his appearance, he asked his name, and found that he was the last Marquis of Kéroulaz.

THE HEIRESS OF KÉROULAZ.

DIALECT OF LEON.

Ar benn-heréz a Géroulaz
Né dévoa gréat nétza biskoaz.

The little heiress had no care,
Nor other thought in life she knew,
Than play and gambol free as air,
As great Lords' daughters wont to do.

This year the heiress plays no more,
An orphan, she laments in vain,
Her father left her wondrous store,—
'Twere well her kindred's word to gain.

"Alas! my only friend, farewell!
No love have I from kindred known,
My death were news they fain would tell,
And then my wealth were all their own!"

But Kéroulaz fair heiress now
Should be as happy as the day,
For flowers of gold are round her brow,
She wears rich gowns embroidered gay;
She has no latchets to her shoes,
But stockings all of silk so bright,
Such as an heiress well may choose,
And little shoes of satin white.

So thought the guests, when at the ball
She looked as bravely as a bride;
The marquis led her through the hall,
His wily mother at his side.

"Oh that I were a bird to fly,
There, where I might my ear incline,
As in her chamber secretly,
His wily mother speaks to mine.
My heart is sick — alas! I fear
Some deep design their steps have led,
They come not idly wand'ring here,
And know an heiress is to wed!
De Mesle a noble name may be,
He may have wealth, perchance in store,
But Kerthomaz is dear to me,
And will be loved for evermore."

Kerthomaz look'd with heart oppress'd,
As guests came trooping far and near,
He loved that gentle maid the best,
As he to her alone was dear.

"Oh that I were the bird of night
That on the rose tree sings so fair,
To see her when she comes all bright
To gather roses for her hair!
Were I a bird upon the lake
Where maidens lave the robes she wears,
My thirst in that dear wave to slake,
And swell the waters with my tears."

PART II.

That Saturday the evening brought
Another youth who loved her too,
Young Salaün yon halls has sought,
As he had long been fond to do.

He forward spurred his small black steed
And at the castle gate he stood;
The heiress came herself with speed
To give an aged woman food.

"Oh tell me, gentle heiress, pray,
Where are the gallant nobles gone?"—
"They all have sought the chase to-day,—
Why linger you behind alone?"—
"I came not, lady, for the chase
I came to Kéroulaz for you,
I came to look upon your face,
And tell you that I love you true!"

PART III.

"My heart is sad, each day the same,"
The heiress to her mother cried:
"'Tis since the Marquis hither came,
O mother! make me not his bride!
My hand to any other give—
Let Pennanrun decide my lot,
Or Salaün my troth receive,—
I care not, so De Mesle 'tis not!
If I the best of all might name,
One you have not denied is he,
Oh if a boon I dared to claim,
Kerthomaz should my bridegroom be."

"Now good Kerthomaz tell me all,
And let the truth dwell on your tongue;
Say, have you been to Kastelgall,
And saw you ought of vile or wrong?"

"I saw a hall all fill'd with smoke,
With broken casements flapping round;
I saw the doors all black and broke,
But ne'er a page nor groom I found.

" An aged crone was chopping hay,
No corn her master would afford;
Nor better is the feast each day
That crowns De Mesle the miser's board!"

" Now shame, Kerthomaz, you have lied,
The Marquis dwells in pomp and state,
His castle shines with costly pride
And menials at his bidding wait.
Both blest and honour'd is her lot
Whom he shall ask his bride to be—"
" O mother, since I seek it not,
Such honour is not grace to me!"

" O daughter, urge me not again,
I seek for you a happy home,
My word is given, your tears are vain,
You must the Marquis' bride become."

The dame of Kéroulaz was moved,
For jealousy lurk'd in her heart,
Kerthomaz secretly she loved,
And wish'd the heiress should depart.

The maiden's heart was like to break—
" He gave me pledges oft of yore,
Oh! blithe was I those gifts to take,
Oh! sadly I those gifts restore!
Kerthomaz, take your golden chain,
Your ring, your seal I now resign,
I dare not any pledge retain,
Since I, alas! may not be thine!"

PART IV.

That heart was hard that would not melt
To see what looks the heiress cast,
How sadly at her gates she knelt,
And kiss'd the threshold as she pass'd:

" Farewell, dear Kéroulaz, farewell!
And all the scenes I prized of yore,
My friends, my love, I greet ye well,
I shall behold you never more!"

The poor were weeping one and all—
" Oh, mourn not thus," the heiress cried,
" Come to me straight at Kastelgall
And all your wants shall be supplied;
For ev'ry day large alms I 'll give,
And wheat and oats and barley fine,
Three times a week ye shall receive,—
I will not spare the wealth that 's mine."

The Marquis frown'd upon his bride,—
" You shall not squander thus my store,
What means this idle boast?" he cried,
" I 'll have no beggars swarm my door!"

' My lord, no gold of thine I crave,
Yet shall my alms each day be giv'n,
That through the pray'rs we thus shall have,
Our souls may find some grace in Heaven."

PART V.

Two months were past—" Oh! is there none
That dares my messenger to be,
And make it to my mother known
What luckless fate has chanced to me!"

Then softly spake a gentle page—
" Dear lady, write a letter straight,
And I my truth and faith engage
To leave it at thy mother's gate."

The heiress made but small delay,
The page to Kéroulaz has hied,
Where in the hall, with knights so gay
Her mother sat in pomp and pride.

Kerthomaz stood amidst the rest,
But when the letter they unfold,
Sad fears are in the mother's breast,
Kerthomaz' cheek is pale and cold.

"O, quick the grooms, Kerthomaz, call,
To saddle straight our swiftest steeds,
We must to-night to Kastelgall,
My daughter much our presence needs!"
When at the castle gate they rung,
The mother said, "What means this cheer?
Why is the door with mourning hung,
What heavy chance has fallen here?"

"The heiress that two months ago
The Lord de Mesle went hence to wed,
Is cause of all these marks of woe,
That gentle dame to-night is dead."

"Oh, if that lady is no more,"
The mother cried in accents wild,
"'Tis I who crushed that lovely flower,
'Tis I have kill'd my only child!
Her tears my pride could never move,
She would not be the Marquis' bride,
But said, 'Kerthomaz is my love,
And I can love no man beside!'"

Kerthomaz from the world is fled,
Yon abbey walls conceal his care;
The mother, to all comfort dead,
Devotes her life to God in prayer.

CHAPTER XX.

THE LOIRE.—Pappolen.—Loroux.—Jean de Bretagne.—Black Costume.—The Coiners.—La Clé de la Bretagne.—Du Bellay.—Anetz.—Varades.—Le Montglonne.—Ingrande.—Champtocé, and Gilles de Retz.—Prince Gilles.—Emperor Joseph.—An Imperial Godfather.

NANTES, with its varied beauties and all its *agrémens*, was now left behind, while we followed from town to town the course of the Loire, that far-famed river, whose waters flow through twelve departments, and bathe the walls of ten great cities; whose tide had carried on its bosom the galleys of Julius Cæsar and the navy of the Normans; which is celebrated by the poet and historian, and which it is almost heresy not to admire with enthusiasm; a river which, if its broad expanse were filled with water instead of sand, would be perhaps one of the finest in the world; but, as it is, since truth must be told, which scarcely serves to admit of the pas-

sage of a small steam-boat for the distance of twelve leagues without the danger of running on a sand-bank. This occurs during the whole of summer, so that when the Loire is really grand and imposing, it is in an inclement season, when it flows through meadows divested of their flowers, and past forests naked of their leaves. Whoever anticipates beauties, which depend on the glory of its capricious waves, will be indeed disappointed, though enough of lovely and of captivating is to be found on its banks to excuse the fault which its admirers so carefully endeavour to conceal, and which leads so many an eager traveller to the shores of the "majestic Loire," where he gazes round, and imagines himself, from the extent of the "winding sands," in a branch of the Great Desert, till he beholds the woods, corn-fields, and vineyards beside, which proclaim to him that he is really in one of the most beautiful parts of La belle France.

The Loire, like most other great rivers, abounds in legends and traditions; there is scarcely an island or a site to which some tale is not attached. Soon after passing the isle de Biesse, formerly a resort of the famous pirates of the Loire, you observe the antique tower which looks over the picturesque hill of St. Sebastian, which is the country retreat of the

bourgeois of Nantes, and where fêtes and parties of pleasure take place: here the lower orders of the people repair for amusement, the convenience of the omnibus, a Nantais invention, in the first instance not being lost sight of. This was a spot formerly held in great reverence, and the scene of much monkish mummery on occasion of presenting a gigantic candle to the patron saint, which was placed in a boat instead of a mast, and was borne with infinite ceremony to the church of St. Sebastian. Near this is the little bourg of Doulon, where is shown a place called La Papotière, the pavilion of the famous minister of Francis II, Landais, who was here surprised when at supper by his enemies, and obliged to fly: for which indignity he afterwards took a fearful revenge, though a similar fate shortly overtook him.

Beyond these islands is the town of Loroux Bottereau, the scene of an event placed far back, but which possesses a romantic interest. The celebrated bishop Saint Felix, to whom Nantes was indebted for so many benefits, had a young and beautiful niece, who was tenderly attached to a man of good birth and great merit, and one of the handsomest of the Nantais youth. As their affection was mutual and no obstacle appeared, the relations on both sides had given

their consent to the union of the lovers, who were already betrothed, and were happy in the smiling prospect before them, when their dream was dissipated by an order from the bishop that his niece should at once renounce all worldly thoughts, and take the veil without delay. At first, overpowered by so tyrannical a proceeding, the affianced pair were unable to conceive a remedy; but, finding the uncle inflexible in his resolve, the lover in despair had recourse to the only means left him; and, calling in the aid of some determined companions, Pappolen (so was he called) carried off his intended bride, and escaped with her to Loroux, where they remained concealed in the castle of St. Aubin, the ruins of which are still visible. St. Felix, meantime, enraged to find his commands, however unreasonable, disobeyed, sought everywhere for the fugitives; and, at length discovering them, the unfortunate young girl was taken from her lover, and compelled to take the vows at the abbey of Basas.

There seemed now no hope, and Pappolen gave himself up to despondency, finding his enemy as powerful as he was unreasonable; but at that very moment, the tyrannical bishop, who was not a bit the less to be made a saint, suddenly expired. Hope resumed her influence in

the mind of the lover, and he contrived by a desperate sally to possess himself once more of the person of his beloved: again they fled, and again they ventured to imagine themselves in security; but they had only changed foes, and the large possessions of the rich heiress of her uncle were not to be lightly parted with by the Church. An accusation of sacrilege was issued, and they found themselves in a more dangerous position than ever; fortunately, the then reigning King of France had a tender heart, which could compassionate the sufferings of lovers, and espousing their cause when they threw themselves at the foot of his throne, he extended to them his powerful protection, declared the marriage lawful, and made the happy husband governor of Nantes. For some years they lived in the enjoyment of happiness, and Pappolen at length died in defending his native city from the attacks of an usurper.

The castle of Loroux was destined to be the scene of strange events: early in the fifteenth century its walls were witness to a piece of treachery of the most unworthy description, when the unfortunate John V. of Bretagne was betrayed by the ambitious Marguerite de Clisson, widow of the son of Charles de Blois.

The Duke himself has recounted the parti-

culars of this treason, as Dom Maurice the historian of Brittany gives them:

"The preceding Monday, before the day when we were taken by the said Olivier and Charles de Blois, (the sons of Marguerite, who acted by her advice,) while we were still in bed in our castle of the Tour Neuve, at Nantes, arrived both these knights and woke us, taking us by the hand, and saying that it was broad day, and we were stayed for by the ladies at Chantoceau, where a great banquet and festivities were prepared for us, and that the hunting-match attended us. That we might arrive the sooner at Chantoceau, we desired to go by water, but the wind was so contrary that we were forced to take our way by land, and went to sleep at the town of Loroux Bottereau. We had sent before to Chantoceau our *maître d'hôtel* and other domestics, with our chamberlains. The next day Olivier came to us at Loroux to conduct us to the castle, as he said. After we had heard mass, we mounted our horses, and riding along, came to a bridge, where the planks appeared to be in an unsafe condition, and as soon as we and our brother-in-law, Richard, with a few of our people were past, one named Alain Delalande, and others belonging to the said Olivier, cast all the planks into the water.

Then Olivier laid hands on us, and said before we escaped from him we should give him back all his heritage; and then came forth Charles de Blois from his ambush with a great many armed men, and laid hands on my brother, and called to him to surrender; then their people attacked ours, maiming and wounding them severely; and one came towards me with a naked sword, intending to cut off my head, which, by God's grace, he was prevented doing, and this capture made, they took from us all arms and horses, and made us walk on foot to the place they chose."

The unfortunate prince, thus betrayed, was taken from dungeon to dungeon for some time, and the family of Penthièvre appeared to triumph, but the Bretons rose, with one accord, to rescue their chief, and the scene began to change, for the large Breton army took place after place belonging to them, and at length besieged them in their château of Chantoceau. The sons of Marguerite defended themselves stoutly, and she rushed from rampart to rampart with her youngest child in her arms, encouraging the soldiers, and making every effort to defend the place; but in vain, a breach was made, the victorious Bretons obtained possession of the stronghold, delivered their duke, and demolished the

castle. A few of the fine towers and parts of the walls still remain, to point out the theatre of so many struggles, and the Loire flows peaceably past the site of that once powerful castle whose ruins embellish the scene.

The country begins to improve in beauty a few leagues from Nantes; immediately near it, all is flat, with no more interest than the novelty the continued vineyards present, but as the vines are low, the effect at first is not so striking as we anticipated. The costume of the peasant is singular in this part; as, after passing Rennes, all peculiarity of head-dress seemed to disappear, no more *crêtes de coq*, nor folded turbans of the middle ages, existing south of that town; so after leaving this neighbourhood any very remarkable character of dress ceases. The feature at Nantes, in the dress of the women, is the fondness for black, and in the villages round, where costume is always most preserved, the same inclination is perceptible. Their white caps are tied and edged with black, their hoods, petticoats, and aprons, are black, with occasionally a brilliant scarlet handkerchief, which has a good effect in a group. The men wear the same colour, or very deep blue, with sometimes a red waistcoat; we passed through one village where the whole population seemed assembled

in gala dress, and almost every one was in black: the women have small jet hearts and crosses round their throats, and are handsome and neat; but, taken in general, after leaving Normandy and Brittany, female beauty is at an end in France; no more brilliant complexions, and bright blue or black eyes, and much fewer fine forms: one advantage, however, the inhabitants of the vine country have over the cider districts, which is in the superior beauty of their teeth. In Normandy, fine teeth are rare; in Touraine, and all along the Loire, it is the reverse, for you seldom meet with any defect in this particular.

The passion for black, by way of ornament, extends rather farther than one could reasonably expect, even to the breed of cattle hereabouts, which is particularly beautiful. The cows are small, of a delicate fawn-colour, with *black* muzzles and tails; but the fashion does not stop here, the horses are also generally of a pale chestnut, and their manes, tails, and feet, *black;* and we observed several beautiful goats, nearly as tall and graceful as deer, partaking of the same fashionable hue.

The first interesting town we reached, was Oudon, a strangely dilapidated place, which looks as if it had never recovered some ancient siege, in the middle ages; it might be that laid to it

by Saint Louis, or John Lackland; but we shudder to think that, more likely, the horrors of the Vendean war have left it thus. It is beautifully situated in a valley, and on a hill close to the river, having a fine view of a little Archipelago, its splendid tower rises proudly from the midst of the dependant buildings, and its solidity and grandeur amaze the sight. One would think it a recent construction, to judge by the firmness and sharpness of its angles, and the apparent *finish* of its execution; yet there it has stood for ages, and has seen and experienced wars and struggles between rival chiefs, from century to century. In 1526, this remarkable fortress was the abode of two brothers, Jean and Julien de Malestroit, who occupied their leisure hours in fabricating false money in this retreat, which money they found it very convenient to pass amongst their vassals as genuine, who were, *malgré eux*, forced to accept it with as little remonstrance as possible. Some of these persons, however, unable to support this novel species of tyranny, openly murmured at their masters; but still redress appeared impossible, when, just at the happy time, Francis I, by good fortune, passed through Nantes, on his return from Spain, and the affair reached his ears. The measures he adopted were prompt, and the respect-

able chatelains were besieged in their fort by a party too numerous to resist, who took them prisoners, and carried them off to the prisons of Bouffay, where, after a trial, in which a long catalogue of crimes was proved against them, they were condemned and executed, their goods confiscated, and their estates sold, which, in course of time, passed into the house of Condé.

Nearly opposite Oudon is Chantoceau, that other stronghold of the robber and pirate chiefs of the Loire; one in particular, in the thirteenth century, ravaged the whole country, and laid all the navigators of the river under contribution, till the famous Pierre de Dreux attacked him in his den, and took him prisoner, gaining in reward, for delivering the district of so dangerous a neighbour, both his forfeited lands and castle.

Almost every tower and castle that rises in the distance, and starts up close to the path of the traveller, has been, in bygone days, the haunt of robber chiefs, to whom exclusively the river seemed to belong, and endless are the tales which they have left as memorials of their deeds: when these illegitimate marauders were driven out, their stations were usually taken by governors and princes just as violent and oppressive; between the Breton, Angevine, and English lords

who successively obtained the sway, there was but little tranquillity on these beautiful shores; and as one observes the great quantity of towers which must have bristled the borders of the stream, the only wonder is how any unhappy passenger could escape the clutches of these vigilant watchers.

Our road lay between groves of acacia, young oak, poplar, and ash, and, as if everything was imbued with the spirit of times past, the very windmills presented a picturesque tower-like form, unlike ordinary windmills; as all the mills we had seen in Normandy and Brittany had been worked by water, we were startled by the tossing arms of these feudal-looking buildings, which appeared from time to time on heights near, overlooking a fine expanse of wood and water, and their sails glancing in the fitful light of a stormy sky. The day was very uncertain, and though occasionally the sun burst out rendering all the landscape charming, at intervals of half an hour the wildest showers broke over our path, adding perhaps, by the contrast the clouds afforded of light and shade, to the beauty of the prospect. It was in the midst of one of the most pelting of these sudden storms that our vehicle thundered into the long stony street of Ancenis, and we found ourselves whirled through *la clé de la Bre-*

tagne. As usual, every inhabitant was at the door of his house, being Sunday all the population was swarming in the streets, and *scarlet* umbrellas were held dripping over smart petticoats and white caps as dozens of neat-figured girls hurried on their way to church, bestowing an anxious look at the diligence *en passant.* The church has an exterior pulpit, which caught our observation as we rapidly passed it: the fine suspension bridge is worthy of observation; but of the castle, formerly of such immense importance, there is scarcely any vestige beyond some strong walls which have defied time.

On the shore, not far from Ancenis, is the pretty bourg of Liré, worthy of remark for its own merits, and for being so tenderly apostrophised by the poet Joachim du Bellay, one of the "Pleïade," who was born there:* the pursuit of his studies obliged him to pass several years at Rome, where, under the auspices of his cousin the cardinal, he enjoyed all that splendour and fame could bestow; but he looked back to the simple banks of his native Loire and thus breathes his regrets.

* See "Specimens of the Early Poetry of France," for his poems.

DU BELLAY TO HIS NATIVE VILLAGE.

Happy who like Ulysses has explored,
  Or he who sought afar the golden fleece,
And safe returned, his mind with wisdom stored,
  Amidst his native vales retires in peace.
When shall I hail again my village spires—
  The blue smoke rising from that village see,
And the poor mansion of my simple sires,
  Its garden walks a realm, and more to me!
Dearer to me the home that thought recals
Than Roman palaces and gorgeous halls,
Richer than marble or than sculptured stone
The grey slate* on my humble roof that shone,
More bright than vaunted Tiber's ancient tide
My gentle Loire's soft waves, that murm'ring glide,
Sweeter than ocean's breezes fresh and fair
My lovely Anjou's bright and balmy air,
And greater to this longing heart of mine
My little Liré than Mont Palatine!

The Loire beyond Ancenis spreads out broad and grand; on the opposite shore stretching far into the distance, the imagination follows the wild hills of La Vendée. We passed through the pretty bourg of Anetz, and observed some curiously built long-roofed châteaux; one which stood near the road was surrounded by a formally arranged garden, whose blazing beauties seemed endeavouring to overstep the prim bounds laid

* Round Angers are enormous slate quarries from which all parts of France are supplied.

out for them; lines of small orange trees in bloom and fruit were ranged along the low wall and perfumed the air, and the house rose at the back with its inordinate length of slated lines, looking like an antiquated grandmamma ready to reprove the innovations of her family; while beside her stood the long straight unbending form of the maiden aunt in the shape of a thin tower, which seemed to belong to another age, and looked the shade of Grise-gonnelle embodied. We came soon after to another château, beautifully situated, commanding a delightful view, with gardens, fish-ponds, and woods appertaining to it: we were then close to Varades, the scene of frightful struggles during the Vendéean wars, but now all calm and peaceful, and surrounded by a brilliant rainbow, within whose arch rose towers and trees and houses as in a framed picture.

The village of Marillais succeeds, where formerly so many miracles were performed by Notre dame l'Angevine, that pilgrims flocked to her shrine in such numbers as to make the slaughter of a hundred bullocks no more for their nourishment than so many chickens: even at the present day crowds are still to be seen here on the Nativity of the Virgin; but it is the fair not the miracles that brings them.

On a high hill is seen the majestic tower of Saint Florent le Vieil or le Montglonne, almost the last vestige of the once magnificent abbey raised by the piety of Charlemagne, and venerated through ages; here is to be seen the tombelle de St. Moron, where he slept for a hundred years, and where St. Florent retired after having driven out a whole host of serpents who disputed his right to usurp their abode. These legends, however, are seldom named here; we had left behind all belief of the sort in simple and imaginative Bretagne: the tremendous ravages of the Vendéean armies have long ago terrified the race of dragons, as well as miracle-mongers into the lowest caverns far beneath the shallow waters of the sparkling Loire, never to see the light of day again.

Ingrande formed the ancient limits of Anjou and Bretagne, and as the sole separation was two poles on which were elevated the arms of the duchies beside which was placed a huge stone, it is easy to imagine in those *peaceable* times the contentions that must have taken place on the borders, which borders were actually in the town itself. One cause of jealousy between the townspeople was comical enough. When the Duchess Anne became Queen of France she granted the right of *franc-salé* to the Bretons, who conse-

quently paid for salt only two liards a pound, while the Angevines were obliged to buy at the rate of thirteen and fourteen sous. The streets being very narrow a contraband trade was constantly carried on out of the opposite windows. The less fortunate neighbours, who had not profited by these opportunities, were always busy watching the others and finding cause of quarrel in their indulging at breakfast in the luxuries of bacon, ham, or salt herrings.

Though these disputes exist no longer, and no one interferes with his neighbour's *ménage*, yet the town of Ingrande is still divided, one part belonging to the Loire Inferieure, the other to the Maine and Loire.

It is a pretty little lively town, with a very ancient church, and a splendid view round it. Here we were greeted by a charming wedding group, consisting of ten couples, all full of gaiety and spirits, neatly and prettily dressed, the women in dark petticoats and geranium-coloured aprons, and the men wearing their colours. We had not long left this lively party behind, before we were struck with a sight which, of all we had yet met with in the way of ruined castles, interested us the most, and when we heard its history we could not help mentally congratulating the bridal guests that its former terrible possessor

was no longer likely to peer out of his windows on the train beneath his turrets, or woe to the pretty bride! for how would she have escaped from the clutches of this worse Don Juan, the dreadful *croque-mitaine*, this chief of brigands, whose fame has spread from Indus to the pole; for who has not heard, in every language and in every clime, of the appalling name of Blue Beard! Yes, here lived *Barbe-bleue*, not as we know him, the Turkish husband of Fatima, and the butcher of the blue chamber, but in his French character, and in his real identity, as Gilles de Retz, Sieur de Laval.

The ruins are very extensive and exquisitely picturesque: they stand on an eminence, and are seen from all points round. The highest tower, rent in twain from its turrets to its base, seems trembling to its fall and threatening the passer-by. Numerous walls are crumbling round, and through their wide breaches the interior courts are seen; there, half-concealed by brushwood and heath, are seen immense gulfs, dark and yawning, some piled with rubbish and some extending deep into the bowels of the earth, proclaiming their former use as dens of torturing confinement. The peasants in the neighbourhood, even yet, have scarcely abandoned their frequent search among these extensive ruins, for

the love of gain can keep in the spark of belief which superstition has been unable to preserve through an age of canal-making and steaming. Instruments of torture have, from time to time, been found, chains and bolts, and the more favoured few have brought to light, and exhibited to the shuddering mothers of the village of Champtocé the bones of little children!

The dramatic horrors of the castle of Champtocé exceed all that the imagination of the most successful author of melo-drama could put together, and they are the more awful because *they are true.* Those who have lingered a time on this lovely spot, and admired and sketched the fine ruins, would think it hard that its history should be lightly passed over, for never was there a site so fraught with mysterious awe as these walls, which invite inquiry on the very borders of the high road.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, this fortress attracted the attention of Philip Augustus, who deputed as his seneschal Amauri de Craon, who swore to keep it for his service. At the end of the fourteenth century Marie de Craon brought it as her dower to Gui-de-Laval, the father of the hero of its tale.

Gilles de Retz had hardly attained his twentieth year, when he found himself in possession

of immense wealth, which he had increased by allying himself with Catherine de Thouars. He was not only lord of Retz, Brislay, Blaison, Chemelier, Gratecuisse and Fontaine-Milon in Anjou, but of numerous other rich lands and seigneuries in Bretagne.

He was soon surrounded by a host of flatterers and parasites, who lived at his expense, and encouraged him in every luxury and enormity that imagination could invent.

His retinue was composed of two hundred mounted cavaliers, superbly habited. When he heard mass he was met by a train of attendants, at whose head was his almoner, whom he dignified with the title of bishop; after him came archdeacons, vicars, twelve chaplains, and ten choristers, besides other minor officers, who were all provided with their horses and followers. The ecclesiastical robes were of the richest description, composed of scarlet and trimmed with precious furs, according to the respective dignity of the wearers. Chandeliers, censers, sacred vessels and ornaments, all were brought to this magnificent lord, when his humour inclined him for the ceremony, and this ambulatory chapel attended him at his pleasure, the train of sacred domestics being closed by six organs, each borne by six men.

The proud marshal, however, did not consider his grandeur sufficiently exalted, although he saw this brilliant display at his command; it was not enough, as long as his rich presents, his prayers, entreaties, threats, sent unceasingly by his ambassadors to the pope, failed of gaining for the priests of his chapel the right of wearing the mitre: this was his ambition, and, as long as this was denied him, every other exercise of power was without savour to him.

Sometimes, disgusted with the disappointment of his wild desire, he would suddenly quit his castle, and, repairing to some great city, he would make a display of his riches to the multitude. He, on these occasions, caused one of the public squares of the town to be fitted up as a theatre, and there he would cause mysteries to be represented, while refreshments of all kinds were distributed to the assembled guests.

Nothing could exceed the dazzling splendour of the interior of his castle. All that gilding, painting, and sculpture could do to produce effect was there exhibited: the windows streamed with countless hues, the walls and ceilings were encrusted with gold and jewels, and night, with all her stars, and the sun at noon, were imitated in his saloons.

At length his immense fortune began to feel the effects of this unheard-of profusion, and, by degrees, his means began to fail, but the proud lord would not condescend to retrench his expenses; one by one his lands were sold, till, of his enormous possessions, all that was left to him were the lands of Ingrande and the castle of Champtocé.

From this time ended the festivals, the banquets, the processions, the glories of Champtocé; darkness, gloom, and horror, took possession of those devoted walls, and all the remaining powers of mind still left to Gilles de Retz, were bent on one object, the recovery of the riches and the power he had lost. Fearful were his reflections, terrible were his decisions. He had heard that men existed in concealed retreats, who had given up their souls to the pursuit of treasure, who, disregarding all laws, human and divine, sought by every means to enrich themselves, whether to do so it were necessary to enter into a compact with fiends, or the master of evil himself. He had been told, that in Germany and in Italy these adepts were to be found, and he resolved to avail himself of their knowledge, and profit by their power. Accordingly, he despatched emissaries into every part of Europe, resolved to devote the wreck of his fortune to this search;

and it was not long before a troop of wretches of the most abandoned description flocked to his summons, exulting in the opportunity of carrying on their infamous practices under cover of such protection.

Malefactors, thieves, and cheats of all kinds, soon formed the court of the Marshal de Retz. Contrivances of the wildest sort were had recourse to, in order to lead him on from one crime to another: voices were made to issue from the bowels of the earth, directing his researches; apparitions were drawn from the dark recesses of his dungeons, urging him to commit the most revolting crimes, and the subterraneous vaults of his castle echoed with the cries and groans of the victims sacrificed to his monstrous ambition of evil.

Every means which the utmost depravity of an alchymist's mind could conceive, were put in requisition to obtain the transmutation of metals, to attain the art of making gold, and to gain that elixir which should at once bestow exhaustless riches and immortal life. The mysterious furnace was burning night and day, and real treasure was cast into it with a view of bringing more, while the wretched dupe of a band of desperadoes blindly followed all the counsel their rapacity suggested.

At length, a new juggle revived his fainting hopes: a learned Indian was presented to him, who had explored every part of the known world, and to whom no marvel of nature was a secret. This man's appearance was of a venerable character, his countenance was severe and commanding, his eyes bright and piercing, his venerable white beard descended to his breast; his manners were refined, and the dignity of his demeanour bespoke an acquaintance with the most exalted of the earth. He appeared ignorant of nothing, and though frequently silent, his words, at times, would flow in a stream of eloquence impossible to resist, and he would recount events of the most extraordinary kind which had happened under his own observation. This man obtained entire possession of the whole mind and intellect of Gilles de Retz, and everything belonging to him was immediately at the mercy of this charlatan.

A thousand extravagances believed by the Marshal as supernatural apparitions were constantly performed by this pretended sage; all the absurdities of the Cabala were produced, which, in that dark age, passed as superhuman mysteries. Murders without end were committed to forward the "Great Work," as, the blood of infants being a chief ingredient in the pre-

paration, no cruelty was spared to obtain it. Young girls disappeared, young men were spirited away; in fact, the whole country was depopulated, and terror and desolation reigned. The fabled dragons of old tradition, probably types of such chatelains, did not spread more ruin and destruction by their pestiferous breath.

The Indian, after having raised a spirit who was made visible to the credulous De Retz, contrived to persuade him that, from his having incautiously pronounced a holy name at a wrong moment, his power to discover secrets in his own person was null, and that he must himself repair to Florence, where in a secret cavern it was revealed to him that a wondrous treasure was to be discovered. He demanded the means of carrying into effect this important attempt, which would secure them both boundless riches: of course he was furnished with all he required, and departed, while, during the year he was to be absent, the infatuated man renewed all his orgies.

It had, however, been discovered that several children of families in Nantes, after having been caressed by emissaries of the Marshal, had suddenly disappeared; and this being beyond the extent of his sway, for he had exhausted all his own vassals, violent murmurs arose; en-

couragement and protection was offered to all who had wrongs to complain of, and in a brief space the law and the clergy were obliged to listen to charges which bribery or fear had long kept dormant. The Duke of Bretagne, Jean V, was appealed to, the whole country awoke from it storpor, and the infamous De Retz and his associates in crime were unmasked. Great, however, were the difficulties of obtaining possession of his stronghold, and it was only by means of stratagem that he fell into the power of justice, and was transferred to a dungeon which he had so long laboured to earn.

Hideous were the revelations which search in that castle produced. It is recorded that the half-burnt bodies of more than a hundred children were found, many prisoners were set at liberty, and the grave closed over the horrible details of wickedness which was now brought to light.

The pretended Indian was arrested, and proved to be a Florentine named Prelati; when put to the torture, he confessed everything. Gilles de Retz continued obstinately to maintain silence for some time, but his resolution gave way when he saw the instruments of punishment prepared for him. He then, bursting into tears, made a revelation of all his past life,

and betrayed horrors which the judges listened to with shuddering. He was asked what motive induced him to massacre so many innocent victims, and he replied that he looked upon that act as small in the amount, for, his great object being to procure riches, all means were legitimate with him; nor did he enter into the minutiæ of what was necessary to gain his end. From this time a change seemed to come over De Retz's mind, and the deepest repentance to take possession of his heart; he wept incessantly, and the sight of his penitence seemed to efface in some measure the horror of his wickedness. He attributed his crimes to the unbounded licence permitted him at so early an age; to his overweening pride, which led him to consider that no law could reach his dignity or his riches; he concluded by saying that he had confessed many crimes, but he had committed far more.

It is to be supposed that his audience must have "supped full of horrors," and, since fondness for the marvellous was probably as great in the fourteenth century as at the present day, great excitement must have attended the trial of this "master villain;" and it is related that the female part of the assembly who witnessed his last hours were peculiarly tender in their commiseration.

But, in spite of the sympathy which the *woes* of the interesting marshal had given birth to, the merciless judges condemned him to be conducted in chains to the meadow of Biesse, attached to a stake or pile, and burnt alive. According to the custom of the time, the heads of families, who had heard the last words of Gilles de Retz, fasted three days, and inflicted *on their children* a severe whipping, in order that this terrible example might never be effaced from their memories. Under these circumstances the youth of the Loire had certainly little chance of falling into bad courses from love to the memory of the Marshal.

The ceremonies were long and great on the occasion of this execution: as if to make up for their tardy administration of justice, both priests and judges vied with each other in making the preparations of punishment public and imposing. Bretagne, Poitou, Maine, and Anjou sent their thousands to be witness of the end of this scourge of the country. His relations had, however, obtained the permission to have him strangled before the flames of his pile were lighted, and they contrived to carry off his body, which was given to some pious women who concealed it. He showed much weakness and pusillanimity at the last, and seemed terrified at the torments he was

to endure, so that though he was not consumed by a wasting death, his apprehension punished him as much. Power and riches being omnipotent, the Duke de Bretagne was induced to permit his friends some time after to have his body buried in holy ground. His obsequies were, therefore, performed with great pomp and magnificence in the convent of the Carmelites, and a cross of stone was erected on the spot where he had undergone the sentence of the law.

This romantic ruin is rich in recollections; here, during his first exile from court, after the death of his father the Duke of Bretagne, the unfortunate Prince Gilles retired with his young wife, till his brother's prejudice against him had subsided. But here he passed his melancholy hours in vain, for the hatred of Duke Francis I. only increased by time, and he was dragged from these walls and carried about from dungeon to dungeon, till on the shores of Bretagne he perished miserably of starvation and violence, like young Rothsay in the depth of the caverns of a feudal castle.*

The period of the destruction of this fortress is not precisely known; it was probably during the

* Roujoux, "Histoire des Ducs de Bretagne."

civil wars of the sixteenth century: the manor is now the property of the owner of the magnificent mansion of Serrant, and this ancient barony of Anjou is now an insignificant village.

Among the anecdotes related of this part of the country is one of rather more amusing character than the preceding. It is told of the Emperor Joseph II. while travelling in France under the name of the Count of Falkenstein.

One morning a carriage stopped to change horses at Champtocé. A traveller descended and horses were asked for, but all seemed confusion and bustle in the inn yard, and none appeared forthcoming. At length the post-master rushed out and declared that he had no possible accommodation to offer to assist the traveller in his journey: not a single beast was left in the stable. "The fact is, sir," said he to the impatient stranger, with an air of importance, "a great event has happened in the house, — my wife is just brought to bed, and we have sent the horses off in every direction to inform the relations and friends who are to be present at the baptism. You will, I am sure, pardon the feelings of a father, and enter into my position. Your countenance encourages me to hope that overlooking this little interruption to your journey, which cannot be

helped, you will condescend to remain and take part in our little family fête." — "Very well," answered the traveller, much amused, "I have not the least objection; I will be one of the witnesses, if you like, or your son's godfather, if that would please you."—"His godfather! why I should be much honoured, but this request of yours places me in an embarrassing situation. The truth is, I have promised one of my neighbours, and politeness, you know—" — "Yes, I see," answered his new friend; "but come, let us try to manage it and endeavour to persuade your neighbour to give up his rights to me." This was agreed to, and without much trouble, as the stranger was pronounced to have all the air of *un homme comme il faut*, the right of sponsorship was relinquished to him. When all was ready the procession set off to the church: there the *curé*, as usual, demanded the name and calling of the godfather, who replied with a great deal of *sang-froid*, "Joseph, Emperor."

The consternation of the whole company may easily be conceived: the fainting of the godmother, the amazement of the priest, the terror of the father, who, falling on his knees at the Emperor's feet, entreated his forgiveness for his mistake.

Joseph raised him, and laughing heartily, desired

that the ceremony should go on, which done, after making suitable presents to the *curé* and the family and friends, and promising to recollect his little godson, he seated himself in his carriage and continued his journey so amusingly interrupted.

CHAPTER XXI.

Château de Serrant.—Shakspeare and Victor Hugo.—French ladies in the Country.—Inn at Angers.—ANGERS.—The Castle.—Young Arthur.—Queen Constance.—Cathedral.—Mr. Pitt.—Duke of Wellington.—Carved Houses.—The English Women.—House of Counts of Anjou.—Artists.—Travellers incog.—La Point.—Les Levées.—Habitations in Rocks.

OUR leagues before reaching Angers, the attention is arrested by the appearance of a modern country residence, so magnificent, that one can scarcely help fancying the splendours of Chatsworth are rising to view. This is the Château de Serrant, celebrated as one of the finest in France, and the best kept. It has been built at different times during the three last centuries; but this mixture of different styles of architecture, far from offering any unpleasing incongruities, gives a picturesque and majestic character to the whole.

One façade looks towards the Loire, and is

flanked by two fine round towers, crowned by a gallery which runs round the whole building. The principal front is towards the great road; it is between two large wings which form two of the sides of the Cour d'Honneur.

The château has three ranges of building, each decorated with pillars, in different styles of architecture; the staircase is magnificent, and must have been a *chef-d'œuvre* at the time it was constructed, as there are few superior in France. A fossé of eighty feet in breadth surrounds the whole edifice. The park, which contains more than three hundred acres, (French,) is laid out in the English taste, and is rich in very fine trees: the lawns are expansive and rich, the lakes enormous, communicating with the moat by means of ornamental vessels which adorn the sheet of water, on which are numerous swans, and the orangery is the finest in France, after those of the royal castles.

There is a fine chapel celebrated for its magnificent monument to the memory of the Marquis de Vaubrun, killed at Altenheim, in 1675: it is by Coysevox, and is very grand, composed of white marble, bronze, and gold. The gilded sarcophagus, which has a fine bas-relief, representing the circumstance of the marquis's death, supports two figures, those of the dying man and

his wife, who kneels beside him; the draperies and whole design are admirable; the tomb stands in a recess of black marble, and is a work of art of great merit.

Houses of this sort are so rare in France, that one is tempted to imagine they do not exist; in general, the residences of the nobility are antique castles of the middle ages, more interesting in an antiquarian point of view, than as noble and magnificent buildings fit for the abode of the great of modern times. There is nothing left to desire in the beautiful château and park of M. Walsch, Comte de Serrant, which may be pronounced equal to many in England, and one of the first in France.

Our society in the *coupé* was augmented, within a short distance of Angers, by a gentleman on a shooting excursion, who appeared to live in the neighbourhood. He was a very handsome, elegant-looking young man, and had a Parisian air: he expressed his admiration of the recorded beauties of Scotland and England, which he intended to judge of shortly for himself, which would be desirable, inasmuch as his notions of our habits and manners seem derived from the descriptions given of us by his countryman M. Murât, a century and a half since, though who has described our literature to him I am at a

loss to conceive; he professed to be well acquainted with all that concerned a country he admired, but not being more given to letters than most other *fashionables*, he had taken up some rather singular notions which he kindly allowed me to become acquainted with, by way of profiting by his information. Shakspeare, he informed me, was a writer of plays *as well as romances*, and his style was *le romantique*, exactly on the model of Victor Hugo; he had great beauties, but too many extravagancies, which, nevertheless, were preferred to everything else in England.

He was fond of English manners, though he confessed to some French people, the habits of our young "dandies" appeared strange; the *keeping on a hat in the room*, the thrusting the hands in the pockets, and above all, the *wearing an Indian shawl* round the neck, for instance: he looked upon English ladies as the most courageous of their sex, and in this differs not from his countrymen in general, who are remarkable for expecting the most laborious offices to be filled by women of the lower and middle classes, but are amazed and even shocked by a gentlewoman's being otherwise than totally helpless and inert.

We could not help being struck with the fact

of the extraordinary want of enterprise in French ladies, for, during our long rambles in so many different parts, we *never once* met a country party taking the air, either on horseback or in a carriage; we never once met a pedestrian party, nor any female, solitary or accompanied, who had the air of *taking a walk*, in the vicinity of her residence in the country. The fact is, French women do *not* walk, except on a "mail," or on a boulevard, or in a "jardin," in a city, where company is to be met with, but, even there, it is rare, except on fête days, and, in most of the towns where we have observed groups of strollers, they have turned out invariably to be English. The French, as I have before had occasion to observe, *do not care for the country:* a city, and all the rurality that can be procured in a city, is what they enjoy; flowers must grow in rows, or be seen in bouquets or pots; trees must wave in avenues, with statues "peeping from forth their alleys green," and streams must fall into *jets d'eau*, or be confined in basins filled with gold fish. The passion for country life, so common with us, is very unusual in France, and I verily believe they would prefer a close *entresol* in the Rue de Rivoli to the most romantic ramble on the *solitary* banks of the Loire.

This fact may explain the reason of all the

other towns on the Loire being passed over coldly, in comparison with the *cité par excellence*, — the inimitable Tours. Our companion of the *coupé*, on hearing we were journeying thither, congratulated us on the treat in store; he assured us that Tours was *toute beauté*, that nothing could compare to it on these shores, or any other; in fact, that it was a terrestrial paradise. As we had always heard this from every French person we had spoken to on the subject, we were not surprised at hearing the oft-repeated tale confirmed, and we looked forward to our arrival there as something perfectly enchanting.

In an evil moment we followed the advice of our acquaintance, who understood English habits so well, and went to the inn at Angers which he recommended. It was just finished, and the paint was just dried, the draperies of crimson and gold were just fixed in the large desolate saloons, ornamented throughout their dry-rubbed expanse only by a hard-stuffed, blue satin sofa, a few chairs, and a fine bed and marble-topped console, looking the acme of discomfort and pretension; a magnificent view of the bridges, the quays, and the river was all we were destined to find worthy of commendation, in the dearest, worst-attended hotel we had yet visited. The circumstance of the arrival of Eng-

lish strangers being rare, explained the overcharging, which seldom happens now anywhere, but still seldomer has the traveller in France occasion to complain of incivility, as was our case in our hotel at Angers.

We were prepared to see in Angers one of the oldest towns in France, and had expected to be very much interested in exploring streets which we had heard of as so high and narrow that the light of day never entered; we were therefore surprised to drive into what seemed quite a modern-built place, new houses with large square fronts, and the usual grey-painted shutters and slated roofs, all speaking of modern improvements; square after square, street after street, all new, though not particularly clean; a Champ de Mars, new boulevards, new quays; in fact, the whole recollection of the middle ages must be confined to the grim old castle itself, and a few of its contemporaries. In the centre of the town there are still some of the precious old streets remaining, but scarcely a month passes that houses are not demolished and repairs are not made. Angers seems rich and flourishing, there is a great deal of trade, the people are industrious, and occupy themselves constantly. The slate quarries give extensive employment; they are of great importance,

and supply all France. The boulevards are very fine, and well laid out, a range of magnificent houses extends along them and the Champ de Mars, enclosed in gardens, some of which are large; several public buildings adorn this part, and on the whole there are few towns in France that can boast of more spacious and handsome faubourgs. Nevertheless, there is something about Angers which contradicts this lively appearance, and its original nature of a gloomy city still clings to it. In spite of all modern ornament, its sombre and feudal-looking castle casts a shadow over the whole; it rears its massive pile above the buildings at its feet, it looks far over the spires, and quays, and river, and seems to frown on all attempts at emancipation from the thraldom of its presence: its numerous towers, high, dark, and banded with broad belts of darker stone, as if iron-bound, look round on all sides, and seem to survey with suspicion and anger all modern innovation.

There are no turrets, machicoulis, or ornamental gates, doors or windows, to relieve the uniform severity of this wonderful and imposing fortress. Its towers are to the number of eighteen, and being built, like all the erections in these parts, of slate stone, the singular gloomy character they present is explained,

and this shadowy hue prevailing everywhere, sufficiently accounts for the melancholy aspect of the whole town. This subdued cold colour, however, contrasted with the sparkling brilliancy of the expansive harbour, which the waters of the beautiful Maine meeting those of the Sarthe, form here, has, in a bright summer day, a calm and fine effect, quite peculiar to this remarkable town.

Nothing can be finer than the situation of Angers, built as it is in the form of an amphitheatre on the decline of a lofty hill, which stoops to the edge of a majestic river: its castle crowning the height, and extending its gigantic towers as far as the eye can reach, from the broad terrace which commands the distance for leagues, and whose massive and ponderous walls rise from a fossé scooped in the solid rock, ninety feet broad and thirty-three feet deep, presenting an image of solidity and grandeur quite unequalled. This glorious pile was begun under Philip Augustus, and finished by St. Louis; it was long the residence of the Dukes of Anjou, and served at the same time as a citadel.

It was from these hideous walls, we are told, that the unhappy victim Arthur leaped, and was dashed to pieces on the stones as hard as his "uncle's spirit;" or, if the other legend be the

truer one, his uncle's hand here plunged him in the dark waters of the moat, and the grey towers rung with "his drowning scream." More than the usual awe inspired by such remembrances, oppresses the mind as you gaze on these deathless walls, which look as if no mirth could ever have visited them, where the shade of the unfortunate Constance seems flitting sadly, and searching for the body of her mangled son. The château of Angers in a winter night, when the winds howl round this fearful building, and the gentle ripple of the summer river is changed to the hoarse murmur of a swelling flood, when sleet and snow beat against the still barred casements, and darkness canopies the leaden-hued walls, must be a dreary and frightful abode for the prisoners who lie there in durance. The wailings of the injured mother may be imagined mixing with the raving of the blast, and the sad words,

"O Lord! my child, my Arthur, my fair son!"

ringing through the dim vaults of this castle of despair!

The cathedral, dedicated to St. Maurice, is very beautiful: I believe it is considered the most perfect specimen of the architecture of the thirteenth century which exists, for contrary to or-

dinary custom the architects who succeeded the earliest, followed the original plan and completed the building according to the first intention. There are, consequently, no exterior flying buttresses, like those supporting most churches, but so symmetrical are its forms, and so well poised must be its weight, that it supports its immense expanse of nave without requiring that assistance.

There are several other peculiarities in this magnificent pile, such as its having but one nave, no pillar to support the vault, and the columns built into the walls, giving an air of lightness scarcely comprehensible when its vastness is considered. The nave is immensely long and wide, two hundred and eighty feet from the door to the choir, and more than fifty feet in breadth. The rose windows stream with glowing colours of the richest tints, the windows also of the choir are exquisitely perfect, and nothing can be finer than the sharp, clear, bold carving of the string courses and small arches of the aisles. The *maître-autel* is one of the finest and most chaste I have seen; simple and rich without any of the tawdry accompaniments which usually disfigure this part of the church; and the wood carving of the organ is a splendid piece of art in this style. Four colossal cariatides support one of the finest organs in Europe, which placed over the prin-

cipal entrance, has a very grand effect. As the cathedral stands on an elevated part of the town, its lofty towers and belfry are visible at the distance of ten or twelve leagues, and are a fine object in the distant view.

Among many public buildings one which engages the attention is that of the Academie d'Equitation, which has a great reputation; the arms of many foreign noblemen and gentlemen who have been pupils there are preserved in the walls of the riding-school; among others they show with considerable pride those of Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Wellington.

Although, in comparison with the numbers which existed a few years since, there may be said to be no old houses, yet as you wander about the town and reach some of the most crowded parts, your eye is attracted to almost every corner, where it has not been possible to pull down the original buildings, by projecting fronts and curiously carved pillars. The most remarkable is a house at the corner of two streets, *la Haute et Basse du Figuier*, which preserves apparently at the present day the first intention of its erection.

Over the shop is inscribed in large characters the words, "A la Corbeille de Mariage;" the shop is a *Magasin de Nouveautés*, and the whole front

of the house is a comment on this sentence, for the history of the first wedded pair is exhibited in high relief all over the walls. Adam and Eve, nearly the size of life, figure on the two door-posts in the costume of the fourteenth century—the wife with a distaff and the husband with a spade, with the Tree of Life represented as an orange-tree covered with fruit. The artist seems to have used his utmost endeavour to render the story of our first parents as grotesque as possible, but the implements of husbandry, groups of flowers, fruit, and herbage introduced in different compartments are boldly designed. This curious façade is well preserved and quite a treasure in its way,—it is the finest in Angers, but there are several, partially entire, equally ancient. One house has the front covered with classic-looking heads, and the figure of an oak-tree alternately in relief, enclosed in lozenges with delicately carved borders crossing each other: others have stripes of carving, and many are striped with alternate wood and scales of slate. Many have grinning monsters crawling up and down the pillars which support the door-way, and scriptural allegories are common on houses at the corners of streets.

The pavement in the old part is very bad, and as many of the streets are very precipitous, only

foot-passengers can attempt the ascent; the most perpendicular of these are paved in steps, otherwise it would be impossible to mount them, and the effect of looking down these high, narrow, dark lanes is most singular.

The people have a character for great refinement, but from our own experience we cannot pronounce their fame to be deserved; they are civil in pointing out the road to strangers, but have less courtesy and more curiosity than it is common to meet with. Few foreigners visit them, as Angers is out of the steam-boat line of the Loire, and as they depend little on strangers they look at them more inquisitively and with less consideration.

Being caught in a hard shower in one of the narrow streets while sketching the façade of a wooden house, we were invited to enter a handsome shop, the neatness and cleanness of which we had already remarked. The mistress ran out into the rain, and in excellent English begged us to walk in: the mystery of clean boards and neat windows was now explained, for the pretty young woman who was so anxious to offer hospitality proved to be our countrywoman, married to a Frenchman and settled at Angers in the calling of a *confiseur:* we were not a little amused at her delight in speaking her own language, and

the pride with which she exhibited her little son, who could not talk English, and the pleasure she seemed to take in slyly quizzing the habits of her husband's country. She told us that there were a few English families in and near Angers, but this is the place where they are least met with, although it is difficult, in all beaten tracks, and especially where there is any remarkable beauty of country, not to encounter England at every turn, English advertisements on the shops and at the hotels; but at Angers they are independent of us altogether, as a shopkeeper informed us, with whom we entered into conversation, and who expressed his conviction that England must be a very disagreeable country, otherwise its inhabitants would be fonder of staying at home. It does not seem to enter into the consideration of a Frenchman that any one should travel for amusement, unless he found his home inferior to all other places.

One of the objects usually pointed out to travellers is a beautifully-ornamented stone house, in one of the centre streets, said to have been used as a residence by the Counts of Anjou. The façade is very elegant, the carving delicate and elaborate, and, both internally and externally, it possesses much interest. It is now to

be sold, and appears in excellent repair, so there is no fear of its being removed. At the angle next the street is one of those pretty little *tourelles* which are so ornamental, and look as if intended for the boudoir of a fine lady, the galleries and dome delicately worked in stone, and the front adorned with some device, concealed in a labyrinth of lines and flourishes.*

Angers would repay the curious who may choose to remain a short time within its walls, for, in so very ancient a town, every day would bring to light some new, or, rather, some old object of interest. Menage and Volney are among the boasts of Angers, which is their birth-place. There is a good public library, and a *musée* which contains pictures, principally of the French school. The Jardin des Plantes is vaunted, but scarcely deserves its reputation: the walks look slovenly and neglected, but might be very agreeable, if attended to. There are some fine antique firs and cedars at the entrance; but with rather more than common French exaggeration, we had been informed that the jardin was the

* These apparently ornamental turrets were, however, in turbulent times, constructed for purposes of defence. They are frequently met with at the angles of streets, and, sometimes, with arrow-slits, (*balistraria,*) for the use of the cross-bow men.

finest in the kingdom, after Paris and Montpelier, and we were strangely disappointed, particularly in the collection of aquatic plants, which is extremely small; indeed, the whole space of ground is inconsiderable, and its productions insignificant, when its high pretensions are considered: there is a great number of the cactus tribe, of peculiar beauty, but not remarkably rare.

One nursery-maid and a child were all the promenaders in this garden, and they were gone before we left the enclosure. Were it not for the amusing gambols of a few ducks, I suspect the Angerins would resort thither *not at all*, the quays and streets being always preferred by them to total solitude, apart from the hum of men.

An English artist, Mr. Hawk, is settled at Angers, and, in conjunction with a French author, M. Godart, has published a very curious and beautiful work,* which embraces great part of the department, and presents some interesting views, of several little-known treasures of architecture. The work is to appear in numbers, but only one is yet ready; it gives promise of being valuable when completed.

Our acquaintance of the *coupé* to Angers mentioned to us a pair of *voyageurs*, of whom we

* Anjou Illustrated.

several times heard afterwards on our route, who had created some sensation in this part of the world. They were Englishmen and pedestrians. They travelled *en blouse*, carrying their wallets and drawing materials, in the guise of artists, but were shrewdly suspected of being *milors* in disguise. They were château hunting.

They traversed the whole country and would not miss a château, managing to coax permission to visit those which were not open to the public, and carefully examining all. We could not help forming a wish that they may be authors as well as designers, and that the result of their interesting rambles may some day be generally known. We could not discover who they were, their names not having transpired, but if they had, we should not have been much nearer our end, as an English name is to a French person, like the name of Allah to a Mussulman — not to be mentioned lightly, though the reason is not the same.

At the village of la Pointe, the Maine joins the Loire; the whole country round was formerly a Roman camp, where not less than one hundred thousand men were accustomed to manœuvre at ease; occasional remains may be discovered, and Roman coins are continually turned up in the soil. A more obvious remain

of Roman power exists in the famous Ponts de Cé, a construction of four flat bridges of great extent, which form a singular feature at this part of the river. Louis XIII. fought on this spot, in 1620, a famous battle against his mother, Marie de Medici, and in 1793 another fearful struggle took place between the inhabitants and the Vendéeans.

Another remarkable work commences about this part of the river, at la Daguenière, where the famous Levées de la Loire is first met with. This immortal undertaking, which keeps the waters of that widely-wandering river in check, and restrains, with a giant arm, its desolating ravages, has rescued from annihilation, and rendered rich and fertile that part of the banks called la Grande Vallée de la Loire. This wonderful raised road is twenty-two French feet high, and twenty-four feet wide, constructed with such solid masonry that no force can injure it. It runs along an extent of forty leagues, and is, from its extraordinary strength and utility, one of the most surprising works in Europe. The first projection of so magnificent an undertaking, is attributed to Charlemagne, but Louis le Debonnaire, in 819, issued an edict respecting its formation: of course, at that early period, it was imperfectly executed, and not till the beginning

of the eleventh century, was the part which connects Angers and Saumur begun. It was about 1160, that Henry II. of England, that enlightened monarch, so superior to his age, whose wisdom and foresight are shown in all the benefits he bestowed by his public works on his subjects in different provinces, terminated the great labour so well begun. At this period, however, the object was, not to afford a communication from town to town, but to secure the country on that side from inundation. A century later this improvement took place, and since then, no pains have been spared to preserve this glorious monument of the industry and perseverance of man.

The Levée is now a fine broad-paved road by the side of the river, bordered with rows of poplars and passing through towns and villages and rich meadows. One village, that of Tuffeaux, is remarkable for its immense quarries of sandstone (tuffa), which have been worked for twelve centuries, for the construction of most of the edifices on each side of the Loire. These quarries are at the present day actual catacombs, and it is unsafe to attempt to explore them. From this spot begins a very remarkable feature of these shores, and one which, when first seen, excites the greatest surprise. I allude to those

subterranean habitations scooped in the rock, whose mysterious and picturesque appearance I at first thought a work of nature, but their frequent recurrence convinced me that the hand of man had formed them, and, as for leagues they constantly appear, not only by the river, but spread over the interior of the country, they ceased, of course, to excite astonishment, but had always the same interest, for nothing can be so romantic and curious as these caverns at every imaginable distance along the face of the rock, inhabited by all classes of people, from the beggar who finds a mere shelter, and the peasant who scantily furnishes his sylvan apartment, to the rich *bourgeois* who builds himself a summer retreat and ornaments his wild haunt in every variety of way which his taste or fancy may suggest.

CHAPTER XXII.

Saumur.—The Traveller from Pau.—Quays.—Place de l'Hôtel de Ville.—Fine Castle.—La Butte des Moulins.—The Farmer.—Churches.—Archbishop of Tyre.—King René.—La Nourice.—N. Dame des Ardilliers.—The Figure.—The Brides.—The Forlorn Lady.—The Warning Bride.—The Restored Lover.—N. D. de Bon Secours —Celtic Monuments.

UR companion from Angers along the Levée was a young French traveller, who was on his return to Paris from Pau, and who held in sovereign contempt all towns, villages, and cities, churches, cathedrals, and castles which were situated as far north as the Loire: he laughed at all hills Norman or Breton, for he had wandered amongst the snow-crowned mountains of Berne,—he had seen the châteaux where the infancy and childhood of Henri Quatre were passed: he had rocked the tortoise-shell cradle in which the little hero reposed, and had heard

the song which Jeanne d'Albret sang when she brought his grandfather's son into the world. All this was worth boasting of, and we felt as envious as the traveller could possibly have desired: he described Pau as all that the most fastidious dandy could insist on: the accommodations perfect, the society charming; the *fêtes champêtres*, balls, parties, exquisite; the villas delightful, mansions fine, and no *one* fault to be found with this paradise of waters but its distance from the capital.

Carefully *avoiding* the recommendation of our companion to an inn at Saumur, warned by our last at Angers, we abandoned ourselves to the fate which attends diligence passengers, which is generally better than any other if you do not attempt to improve it, and we were set down in due time at L'Ecu de Bretagne, the *name* being in its favour, and the *ermines* of the Duchess Anne seeming to hail our arrival. Shenstone's welcome was here exemplified! it was really quite amusing to see the alacrity with which all the female attendants hurried to assist us and secure our safe retreat up stairs, where no rude rival could tear us or seduce us from the Ecu de Bretagne.

We found that our friends kept an hotel which was not looked upon as the *first*, which

probably accounted for their civility and anxiety, as the scorn expressed in the countenance of our Parisian told them at once that he should go on to the Belvedere on the quay, the situation of which was certainly better: to us, however, this, being in the centre of the town and, moreover, a remarkably antique building, had more charms: it must have been one of the oldest houses, as its projecting stories betrayed, but it was newly painted and had undergone repair to fit it for the more fashionable neighbourhood which surrounded it. A magnificent high street, well paved, of great extent, and adorned with good shops, was just before us, and of a star of handsome streets our quaint hotel formed the centre. The Loire is here close to the town, less encumbered with sand, and looks fuller than we had seen it: one great beauty it possesses is the crystal clearness of its waters, which, quite unknown to mud, never lose their limpid purity, but glitter along their golden bed like liquid silver. The quays at Saumur are very fine and very neat; the first morning we walked out to explore, we were struck with the cheerful appearance of everything: the market was in full force, and, as the sun was bright, the scene was peculiarly animated and pretty. Groups of market women were sitting and standing on the stones in the

great square opposite the Hôtel de Ville, their vegetables and fruit looking rich and glowing: strawberries and purple grapes side by side, and gigantic melons and cabbages in all directions. The peasants, however, both in costume and in neatness of general appearance, are far inferior to the Norman women, whose beauty adds so much to the general effect. The Hôtel de Ville is a very remarkable building; it is like a fortress of the fourteenth century, and probably combined the characters of a castle and a dwelling-house at the period of its erection; as it is very perfect, and its turrets and walls very fine, it has a charming effect at one side of the great square, which is closed on another by a shaded walk, called the Mail, and a handsome Salle de Spectacle. Connected by a pretty bridge to the shore on a wooded island, covered with gardens and ornamental buildings in very good taste, is the large establishment of the baths, which, from its gay and handsome appearance, adds greatly to the scene. On the whole, it is difficult to find anywhere a more sparkling, lively, pleasant view than the Place of the Hôtel de Ville, at Saumur.

The bridge is one of the finest on the Loire, and the situation of the town perfectly beautiful: as if in entire contrast to the gloomy

castle and grey shadowy buildings of majestic but sombre Angers, this lively place offers everything to cheer and delight.

The fine castle is kept up as a military station, consequently has none of the dismal effect of those we had formerly seen, which are generally used as prisons. It stands on a commanding height above the town, and is seen in every direction to its very base, as if it had no dark nooks or dungeons to conceal, but offered itself to view, open, honest, and gay, like a young knight in full armour, prepared at all points, and ready for resistance, but frank, generous, lively, and spirited. Long lines of embattled walls run along the top of a high down: round and square towers in perfect repair, and bridges and gateways, all entire and guarded, give an air of safety and cleanliness quite unique to this fine fortress, which is of immense extent, and contains quite a town within its walls. We roamed round, in all possible ways, to see it in different aspects; and, wherever seen, it is magnificent, being built of very light-coloured stone. This cheerful aspect is natural to it; and, placed among the healthy heathy downs where sheep are grazing, as on the downs in Sussex, nothing can be superior to its position; and a long walk on such a ridge of hills is a treat seldom met

with. As we were indefatigable walkers, as long as light permitted we continued, during our stay, to ramble about, enjoying the fine prospects which are found at every turn. From a hill called La Butte des Moulins, where we were tired of trying to count the innumerable windmills which whirl round on every little eminence, and look like childrens' toys, is one of the finest views on the Loire; and, if that river were full of water, magnificent, indeed, would be the prospect it presents. The numerous islands, rocks, coteaux, towers, castles, and villas, along its winding course, give it features of unequalled beauty.

The weather was showery and uncertain, though in the intervals brilliant, fresh, and pleasant; but, the violent torrents which poured down almost every second hour, rendered the scrambling about the steep coteaux a service of some difficulty, if not of danger. We discovered a way, however, used by the peasants, cut in steps in the rocks which led up from the river-side to the heights; and, as we slowly mounted this rugged path, now through fields, now through lanes and vineyards, we turned to look at the gradations of prospect which met us at every pause — all charming, varied, and lovely. Sometimes a tremendous shower rushed down without a moment's preparation; and we were fain to shelter ourselves

under the projecting battlements of some bit of ruin, or creep into some cave till the sunburst gave us notice to resume our slippery ascent. We were wading through an apparently interminable village on the summit of the mountain, where mills appeared at every hundred yards, enclosed in high, well-built brick walls, when a ruddy, handsome, stout farmer appeared at his gate. His astonishment was so great at our apparition from a very deep and difficult road, that he could not restrain his mirth, and addressed us, apparently considering it a pity to lose the opportunity *de s'égayer* by learning something of our erratic movements.

"But what, ladies," he exclaimed, "could possibly induce you to climb up here in all this water and mud? but perhaps it was to see the *point de vue?* It is worth some trouble; but I should never have expected you to take it. How did you get up?" By this time he was joined by a neighbour, who seemed equally surprised. At length a new light burst on them. "Perhaps," said our first friend, "you are strangers? I should not wonder if you were English; they mind nothing." He was charmed at his own penetration when I acknowledged the fact. "And so," he continued, "you are travelling about this way all over the country just to amuse your-

selves? *c'est unique.*" After his friend and himself had enjoyed a hearty laugh at the very comic idea, he, with the true French, as well as Yankee spirit, proceeded to enlighten himself by the revelations we made of our whereabout. "You have no vines in England?" he asked; "and I suppose you never see a prospect because of the fog from the sea, as it quite shuts in the whole country? I don't wonder you are glad to get out of it."

We took leave of our lively acquaintances who wished us *bon voyage,* and concluded by wishing French women would take example by us, and walk about more in the air; so we felt consoled by these commendations of our heroism, which nicely balanced the expressed opinion of our *bizarrerie.*

There are several good churches in Saumur: that of St. Pierre is a work of the tenth or twelfth century, but light and graceful: it has been considerably changed from its first construction, and has a modern portal and no vestige of painted glass. The organ case is in the style of that at Angers, and very fine.

The most curious and interesting church is that of Notre Dame de Nantilly, dating from the fifth or sixth century, and preserving much of its original character. It is kept in beauti-

ful order, and has been well restored. The two lateral walls are ornamented with twisted pillars, whose capitals are double arches. The roof is of a cradle form.

The principal door is decorated with two columns, the capitals of which, as well as those of similar ones in the interior, are composed of grotesque figures of animals: the choir, and the two arms of the cross are modern; but the most remarkable feature is, that the whole of the interior of the church is hung round with antique tapestry of sombre hue, faded and brown, but sufficiently perfect to exhibit warriors and horses, towers and castles, trees, rocks, angels, garlands and labels, all of which, being separated by the eye from the confusion into which they are thrown, appear to represent the taking of Jerusalem. Titus, Charlemagne, St. Louis, and a host of worthies who "battled for the cross," are there with their titles worked over their heads, or their names proceeding from their mouths; cross-bows are being discharged, and the followers of Mahound are seen issuing out of portals much too small for them, and their turbans overtopping the turrets close at their sides.

Against one of the massive pillars which support the roof is fixed a very curious relic, with this inscription:—

Crosse de Gilles
Archevêque de Tyr,
Garde des Sceaux au Roi Saint Louis,
Né à Saumur, mort à Dinant,
Et inhumé dans cette Eglise en 1266.

The crosier appears to be of brass, gilt; it is finely chased, and the interior of the curve represents two figures, which may be intended for our first parents, on each side of the tree of life, while the crook itself is in the form of the serpent.

Against the pillar opposite is a black slab with antique letters, which I thus deciphered. Doubtless the epitaph is the composition of the King of Troubadours himself, whose kind heart was more observable in all he did than either his judgment or his talents; though, "for a king," he was no mean genius, as, for example, his fine illuminated book of the laws of chivalry in the Bibliothèque du Roi at Paris, testifies, though his work at Rennes rather disappointed us! Let his poetry speak for itself, as his affectionate and grateful feelings do in these lines:

EPITAPH.

Cy gist la nourice Thuphaïne
La magme qui ot grand païne
A nourir de let en enfance
Marie danjou raine de France *

* The neglected wife of Charles VII, the lover of Agnes Sorel!

Et apres son frere rené
Duc damon et de puis nõmé
Comme encor est roy de sicile
Qui a voullu en cette ville
Pour grant amour de nouriture
Faire faire la sepulture
De la nourice de sousdicte
Qui à Dieu rendit lame quiete
Pr avoir grace et tout deduit
l'an CCCC cinquant et huit
Au mois de Mars 8 jour
Je vous prie tout par bonne amour
Affin quelle ait ung pou du vostre
Donnez luy bone paternostre.

On several of the walls are some remarkably fine specimens of high relief in white marble slabs. The costumes of the figures are of the fourteenth century; the airs of the heads are very grand, and the draperies admirable. One of them, representing John the Baptist receiving the people in the desert, is peculiarly well done—the perspective good, and the grouping excellent, the crowds pouring along the passes, and pressing forward to the spot where the saint stands, are exceedingly well expressed. These sculptures have been very well restored by a modern artist of Saumur, Philipon, and are a great ornament to this singular old church.

Notre Dame des Ardelliers is now undergoing repair, and is a very fine church; it was begun in 1553. Cæsar, Duke de Vendôme, came here

in pilgrimage afterwards, and built the fine sacristy which is at the side; in 1634 the Cardinal de Richelieu came also, and added a pretty chapel on one side; twenty years after which, the Marquis de Sablé constructed one exactly similar to answer it, and placed in it a picture by Philip de Champagne; in 1654, Abel Servien, superintendant of finances, raised a magnificent dome, forty feet high and sixty feet in diameter, adorned with Corinthian pilasters.

In one of the chapels we were struck by what, to us, appeared a curious spectacle. On a high bed of moss, shells, and weed, lay the figure, beautifully modelled in wax, of a young girl. Her face was exquisite, and her long dark eyelashes reposed on a round soft cheek, delicately tinged, her pencilled eyebrows formed two small arches across her white forehead; her dark waving hair was carefully laid along the sides of her white dress, and reached nearly to her feet, her small hands were laid on her breast, and the whole appearance of this charming figure was that of a person found drowned. We speculated very much as to what it could mean, as we examined it through the gilded trellis which divided it from the church.

It was not till afterwards that we discovered our young lady to be no other than Notre Dame

de Bon Secours, or des Rochers, or d'Août herself, so represented for the benefit of those mariners of the Loire who visit her shrine, which is held in great reverence by the boatmen and navigators from the shores of Bretagne: we were informed that this figure, or our lady herself in her form, had wrought innumerable miracles; it seems she preserves from winds, storms, and wrecks, and no properly-conducted mariner will pass the dome of Notre Dame des Ardelliers without a prayer to her Sister of the Moss and Shells. I never saw so pretty an altar, or so well executed a saint; she was quite new, just fresh from the artist's hands, and had not yet had time to get tarnished and dingy.

The legend attached to this figure is differently told; certain it is that the bones of a female were found in one of the caverns of the rocks in this neighbourhood, and the usual visions and revelations indicated the wish of the Holy Virgin to have a chapel erected for her at Saumur, which was accordingly complied with.

There is a tradition that an island existed at the mouth of the Loire, which some conceive to have been Croisic, on the Breton coast, now the watering place of Nantes, where the costume of the women is remarkably beautiful; their stomachers being composed of shells stitched in pat-

terns on their bodice, and their heads ornamented with tassels of shells in a very tasteful manner, like Neuhas fresh from their sparry caverns. On this island resided, during six months of the year, the wives of the mariners who navigated the Loire, and for that period they were not permitted to meet: the husbands landing at Ananis and not seeking to interrupt the privacy of their wives, who devoted themselves to the worship of the temple of their god, Bacchus or Ceres, and till the destined period returned, allowed not their thoughts to wander from their occupation, which was that of drying the salt wave of the sea in the sun's rays, and gathering crystals from the congealed drops.* It happened that the youngest and fairest of these widowed brides had been united to the youth of her choice, and the same hour separated from him to be carried off to the island until, six months being expired, he might rightfully claim her: she counted the days and weeks that divided her from her beloved, and as she gathered the shining grains of hardened water her tears fell, increasing the waves at her feet.

The six months being ended, according to the

* As the inhabitants of Croisic still occupy themselves in making salt from the numerous marshes, probably the same business was always carried on there.

custom of the country, little barks were prepared filled with flowers, the sails of silk, the masts of flowering shrubs, and amidst songs and hymns the brides set out on their happy expedition to meet their husband-lovers half way between the entrance of the Loire and Ancenis. They had not sailed long, borne by the silver tide and fanned by the softest breezes, when the boats of the expecting party appeared in view, and the sound of music was heard at a distance. Every heart beat with emotion, and every one tried to descry the form most beloved amongst the crowds which thronged the decks of the opposite vessels. They came nearer, and one by one each bride was received into her lover's boat with welcome and song,—all but the youngest, and she the fairest of them all. No bark urged its rapid course to meet her, no hand was extended to receive her, no garland was prepared to crown her,—she was desolate in the midst of joy, deserted in the midst of happiness. The answer to her sad inquiries was that her bridegroom had never returned from a long and perilous fishing expedition, and his frail vessel was supposed to have been lost in the ocean beyond the mouth of the Loire.

All her companions were too full of their own enjoyments to attend further to her, and as by de-

grees every boat disappeared with its freight,—the poor bride found herself alone in the middle of the stream; the night descending, and all the rich colours of sunset changing to a leaden hue sad as the thoughts which oppressed her. All night she remained in the same spot, and in the morning all the flowers in her boat were withered, her limbs were chilled, and her heart was colder. Slowly and sadly she turned her little bark and sought the first shelter the cliffs afforded. She discovered a cavern scooped in the rocks offering a safe and concealed retreat; and here she resolved for the future to fix her abode and avoid all communication with the world. Here for years she remained, but not without occupation: every night she guided her little vessel along the stream towards its entrance into the great ocean, and there she stationed herself near the most dangerous rocks, to give warning to unwary mariners of their peril, and numerous were the lives her care preserved, until, as no one knew her fate, the "warning maiden" was looked upon as a supernatural being who was deputed by some beneficent power to afford assistance to the distressed.

It happened, that one stormy night the "warning bride" was aware of the approach, not far from the entrance of her own cave, of a vessel

containing two persons, which was tossed about at the mercy of the increasing tempest. She hastened to warn them of the rocks which beset this part of the coast, but before she had time to reach them, she beheld the boat engulphed in the roaring tide. Perceiving, however, that a human form rose to the surface, and struggled vigorously with the waters, she was enabled to row near, and happily succeeded in drawing the exhausted mariner into her small vessel, and reached her cavern before the tempest was at its height. With difficulty she conveyed her fainting companion into the interior of her retreat, and there endeavoured to restore his senses. She beheld his dress with surprise, for she had never seen any similar; his head was shaven, a long beard descended to his breast; a gown of sackcloth was his only covering, confined with a knotted rope round his waist, and on his bosom was graven into the flesh the form of a large cross.

As she bent over the stranger, and watched his countenance reviving, a vague thought made her heart beat quick, for the features, though worn and hollow, seemed familiar to her mind, and when he opened his eyes, she no longer doubted that she clasped in her arms her long lost husband. Their recognition was a melan-

choly one; he recounted to her his adventures in foreign lands, and related that having been driven out to sea, his vessel was cast on a desolate coast, where he had been saved by a hermit, with whom he lived some time, and from whom he learnt the truths of Christianity; that, desirous to impart to his countrymen the happy tidings he had himself received, he had persuaded the holy man, whom he had himself accompanied into many lands, converting the Heathen wherever they wandered, to attempt the same good work on the shores of his native river, where he yet hoped to find his beloved, and to lead her into the right path. His companion in shipwreck was that good man who had finished his useful career before her eyes, but he exhorted her to listen to his precepts, and to take the same vows as himself, to live for Heaven alone.

It required little eloquence on the part of the restored lover to convince the "warning bride" of the truth of all he uttered, and from that time, they resolved to begin their great work of converting their countrymen, which, in many instances they happily accomplished. Dwelling in separate caves at the foot of the steep rocks by the river, and sailing about by night in their shadowy boats, they became the presiding genii of the Loire, and their benevolence and virtue in a

short time won over their former companions to renounce their false gods, and declare themselves votaries of the true; by degrees, numbers, following their example, abandoned the world, and choosing a cave in some of the rocks, gave themselves up to a life of pious meditation, until the shores of the Loire were studded with their holy retreats, and their echoes repeated the hymns of praise sent from a thousand hearts.

When many years had passed, and the "warning bride" was called from this transitory world to receive her reward in a better, her disciples collected her relics with reverence and care, and, handed down from age to age, they now repose beneath the dome of the church by the shore, venerated as those of Notre Dame de Bon Secours.

There are still a great many Celtic monuments in the neighbourhood of Saumur; formerly, more were to be seen, but all along the left bank of the Loire, from Montreuil-Bellay as far as Charcé, where the arrondisement finishes, they occur at intervals: some very extensive and curious, and the objects of much curiosity to visiters.

A pretty walk to one of these Druidical remains is by the new bridge built over the little river Thoue; the road is bordered by high trees,

and extends for several leagues out of the town, the approach to which is very agreeable from all sides. Commerce seems flourishing at Saumur, and, to judge by the rapidity of their building, they must be both rich and industrious: formerly, this place was one of the richest in France for its manufactures, but it owed its prosperity to the establishment of a great number of Protestants, who left it after the fatal revocation of the edict of Nantes, which destroyed the commerce of so many French towns, and in one day destroyed the property of a century: Duplessis Mornay, the governor, had founded an academy there, which had a high reputation, but on this ill-advised measure all disappeared at once, and the once flourishing town became little better than a deserted village. Its great trade now is in beads, chaplets, and enamels, which supply all France; but we saw nothing exposed in the shops, of this kind, to tempt the retail purchaser; all appeared of the commonest description: and no doubt this is the very worst place to buy any of the treasures which it sends to other towns to exhibit, as usually happens in these particulars.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Bangor House, Shoe Lane.

00084754

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 17 February, 2016